Mixed on Mondale *Roger Morris*

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July 31, 1976

Knitting Loopholes

Think of their audacity—Sens. Proxmire and Kennedy had the gall to go before the powerful Senate Finance Committee under Chairman Russell Long, son of the Kingfish, to question special interest loopholes in the pending tax "reform" bill—slipped in without hearings, without votes, without full explanation to other committee members, and in language so technical that even the committee staff didn't always understand it.

Arch-conservative Sen. Carl T. Curtis (R) of Nebraska glared at Sen. Proxmire. "You would serve your state better if you quit looking under the bed!" he said.

Sen. Robert Dole (R) of Kansas admonished Kennedy: "You have impugned the integrity of the committee and some of us don't like it!"

The scandal of the tax loophole hearings finally broke into the press last week after we had almost given up hope.

In New York in his acceptance speech Jimmy Carter repeated that the present American tax system is "a disgrace to the human race." The Democrats in their platform put in generalities about reform. Ha! Democrats have controlled Congress for a quarter century and it is largely their mess that Carter complains about. In repeated, close Senate votes this month tax reformers generally lost because enough Democrats didn't support them. Citing 24 Democrats specifically by name, the Tax Reform Research Group (a Nader affiliate) last week denounced them for "repudiating the tax reform plank" of their party. If Carter is elected can he control the Democrats? Maybe yes; I don't know.

Kennedy, Proxmire, Mondale and others put together their reform group this spring and issued a statement, June 12. There were 11 Democrats plus two Republicans (Brooke and Mathias). They commissioned a 259-page booklet ("Compendium of Papers on Federal Tax Reform") by Joseph A. Pechman, Brookings and Stanley S. Surrey, Harvard Law. The tax reform group, the Pechman-Surrey study, the debate and votes on the Senate floor received almost no attention. No sex appeal. The issues were so technically convoluted as to be almost impenetrable to the non-professional mind. And who cared anyway—with the political conventions coming on?

The thing that finally jarred it loose was a secondary matter in terms of revenue involved (overall tax loopholes next year are expected to cost the Treasury—you and me—over $100 million; remember that 244 individuals with gross incomes over $200,000 paid no income tax at all in 1974). This was the issue of special-interest "midnight" loopholes being inserted quietly in the pending 1536-page bill to benefit specific constituents by members of the powerful 18-man Finance Committee. The amount wasn't so much—just $100 million here, $100 million there—but it was something you could visualize.

These special interest amendments aren't all bad; maybe a third of them are worthy, to correct special hardship cases and that sort of thing. Putting them in isn't immoral. Sen. Mondale has one in himself (which we regard as unjustified): a tax break for the Investors Diversified Services, Inc., a Minneapolis mutual fund. After careful study the House Ways and Means Committee knocked this out but, like others, it was quietly slipped back into the Senate bill.

What is outrageous about these special tax breaks is the haphazard, secretive, surreptitious way in which Russell Long's committee handles them. The House Ways and Means Committee has reformed its procedure: it has let the sunshine in and permitted careful debate. Not the Long committee. "Most of these amendments are so surgically tailored for a particular beneficiary that they might as well include the company's name or corporate logotype," Proxmire complained to the committee last week. "More disturbingly—some 50 of these provisions were quietly added on the final day of the committee mark-up, last May 27." Some of the 50 were analyzed by the committee or the Treasury, with opposing testimony. "Most," says Proxmire, "were not." Was anything heard about these, in the press or on television? No.

Let's just take one as an example. Mobil Oil has been running advertisements recently appealing to the nation against divestiture (separating oil production from retailing and other functions). Meanwhile, in the Finance Committee, an amendment was inserted having the effect of letting Mobil go on using a tax shelter that Congress had otherwise ordered closed in the 1975 Tax Reduction Act. Mobil has interests in Iran that qualify for foreign tax credits (*i.e.*, taxes and profits paid in Iran under some circumstances can be deducted from US taxes). Without mentioning Mobil by name the amendment would permit any interest owned by a company like Mobil as of March 29, 1975, to continue to qualify for the foreign tax credit *for 10 more years*. That's like telling an individual that although his dependent has grown up he can go on subtracting the child's exemption for another 10 years. Several dozen corporations and industry groups found similar proposed goodies put under their Christmas Tree by the Santa Claus Finance Committee.

The New York Times uncovered the fact that one of the assorted favors in the oil group would probably benefit some of Russell Long's family. He professed to know nothing about it and very likely didn't. In the crazy, helter-skelter way in which the goodies are distributed nobody knows who's making the gift or whose hand is in the Treasury cookie jar. Consumer groups—Ralph Nader's, Common Cause and the like—spotted some; nobody knows how many others are concealed. Senators themselves don't always know. A lobbyist asks that certain complicated language be inserted; it gets in; and a few years later, the Sabre-Tooth Oil Co. declares an extra dividend.

There are two dangers in this. Sen. Muskie's Budget Committee has assumed that tax reform would bring in two billion dollars extra this year from loophole-closing; if it doesn't it will skew the big new congressional budget reform package. The deeper danger is that Americans will lose faith in their tax structure. No other country has our voluntary income tax system. It's a good system. It rests on faith. That faith is ebbing. Every loophole, every shelter, every report of every rich man who doesn't pay taxes shakes that faith. And the hour is late.

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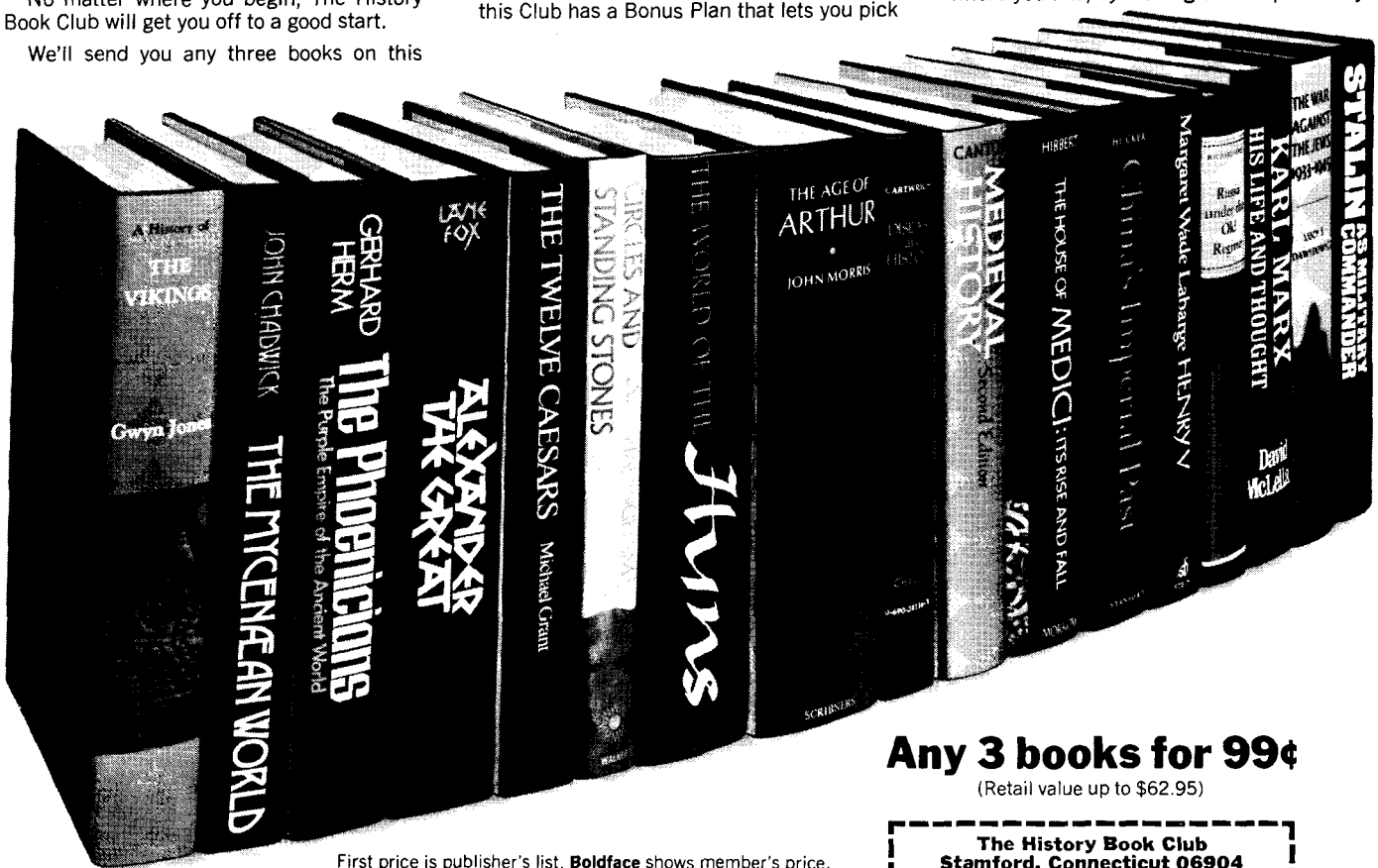

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Unified Or Pacified?

At the national campaign headquarters in Atlanta, it is said, they have designated three denominations of supporters: the Anointed, the Chosen and the Converted. Anointed, presumably, are the happy handful who, by legend, met Jimmy Carter more than three years ago with the audacious suggestion that an only moderately successful, reasonably conservative Deep South governor, constitutionally limited to one term at home, should run for President in a party dominated by various factions of the liberal left. Among the Chosen are the non-Georgians who lined up early, those in the opening primary and caucus states who offered bed and board in the famous "Jimmy Who?" period. And the Converted? Well, they include the balance of what now shapes up as the broadest Democratic consensus since Barry Goldwater helped nudge most of America behind Lyndon Johnson in 1964.

The common thread in this unity is only partly Jimmy Carter's skillful politics, because on the face of it he didn't do much, and there really wasn't much he needed to do to produce it. Four years ago, the Democrats were the party of the three Georges—McGovern, Meany and Wallace—each divided against the other two. Now all three are weakened and whipped into shape; every party faction is on board the Carter ship, pleasantly assured that the man knee-jerks to no orthodoxy but his own and that no one owns controlling interest in the nominee. And that is just about the only assurance Carter has had to offer in gathering the support of the various encampments of Democrats. The party is weary of its own recent past. No faction wishes to shoulder the blame for giving away another election, and they are all apparently ready to patch together the Old Coalition—if that is what is being patched together—on whatever terms are required.

George Meany is a case in point; Wallace and McGovern had no options. Meany helped realize Richard Nixon's dream of a second term with his decision to sit out 1972, a posture he assumed again in the pre-convention period this year. As a result, his most loyal, conservative unions were neutered in the primaries, out-organized and out-strategized by a loose alliance of more liberal, independent unions dubbed the Labor Coalition Clearinghouse. Of the 700-plus delegates and alternates representing trade unions at Madison Square Garden,

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more than three-quarters came there under the aegis of the Coalition. The message was lost neither on Carter nor Meany, and to prevent any further erosion of influence with the man he soon expects to address as "Mr. President," the aging labor baron hastily assembled a meeting of the 35-member executive council of the AFL-CIO and rammed through an early endorsement of the Democratic ticket. Carter's national campaign is now on the federal dole; the Federal Elections Commission has certified $21.8 million in public funds, and no more private contributions may be accepted for use in the general election. But the labor movement can add several million dollars more by reaching into union political coffers to communicate on Carter's behalf with its own members—a heading that properly includes registration and get-out-the-vote drives, activities that could be critical in a close, low-turnout election. And what did Carter offer in return for the AFL-CIO endorsement and future outpouring of money and manpower? "You'll be very proud of me," Mr. Meany was assured.

No one got much more. At the convention, Carter forces locked horns with the liberals in the hall on every reform issue to come before the delegates. The symbolic contest was over "loophole" primaries. In 13 states, congressional district delegates were elected this year in a manner that allowed the party's proportional representation rule to be circumvented. As nominee and perhaps President, Jimmy Carter had several reasons to oppose a future closing of the loophole. For one thing, strict, across-the-board proportional representation—the rule change most favored by reformers as far back as the Eugene McCarthy contest of 1968—facilitates a challenge to an incumbent President (presumably Carter four years hence) by assuring that any intra-party dissent will be accurately registered at national conventions.

For another, loophole primaries were a boon to Jimmy Carter in several states this year. They inflated his victories in about six strategic primaries, including New Hampshire on the first day, Ohio on the last and Pennsylvania in the middle. It was the Pennsylvania result that persuaded Sen. Henry Jackson to get out and Sen. Hubert Humphrey to stay out. Four days later, Carter locked up 94 percent of the Texas delegation with 49 percent of the vote. In retrospect, these were the primaries—all of the loophole variety—that sealed Jimmy Carter's nomination.

Finally, these primaries are also much favored by Democratic state organizations around the country because they believe that the loophole affords them one remaining advantage in sending delegates of their own choosing to the convention. It is the loophole, for example, that assures Mayor Daley's control of the Chicago area delegates and it is the loophole that persuades every presidential contender to bypass Daley's part of the state when the Illinois primary comes around. Carter, whose candidacy was generally made possible by rules that placed the nomination outside the control of the Democratic establishment, opted not to offend party leaders in loophole states, leaders whose organizations he will presumably need to help run the Carter for President campaign in a few weeks. Thus, his hierarchy issued instructions to the floor whips to oppose the reformers on the loophole issue, and it was the one skirmish at Madison Square Garden that the Georgian lost. On a voice vote, the convention assured one of the major goals of eight years of party reform and, despite his triumphant return to the party that banned him last time, probably ended Richard J. Daley's domination over future Illinois delegations.

Carter's acceptance speech put him in the Democratic mainstream, and his designation of Walter Mondale for second spot brought some enthusiasm from liberals. Most of the party's left now assumes (probably prematurely) that whether Carter wins or loses, the transition has already begun with Mondale's selection, and that whenever it ends, the party will have moved leftward without controversy. At best, theirs is deferred satisfaction. Notwithstanding convention-week assurances that he envisions an active Vice President, Jimmy Carter has notoriously been a man who keeps few peers in his immediate vicinity; and there is nothing in his record as governor or since to indicate that his Veep will be more than a man in waiting.

The intrinsic limits of the vice presidency is verified by its present occupant. If Nelson Rockefeller—arguably one of the most powerful men in the world by dint of personal and family wealth, political connections and influence—could make nothing of the office next to a man whose incumbency was shaky from the start and weakened by siege in his own party, no one can. The sole function of the office is that of standing by.

Yet, because Jimmy Carter's political orientation remained vague after 30 primaries, it was the addition of Walter Mondale that gave the Democratic ticket its political complexion. With Mondale's designation, the slate is bonded 100 proof liberal, declared so immediately by the GOP and certified the next day by a headline on the lead story on the financial page of *The New York Times*: "Sag in Stocks Laid to Mondale: Democratic Ticket Regarded Warily on Wall Street."

For those Democrats who still harbored doubts, it was verification that the ticket was their own.

COMING: Edward L. Keenan on the thirteen Soviet nationalities

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Black, White And Very Blue

Montreal

Will the all-too-precipitate departure of the black nations brand the twenty-first Olympiad as "the White Games?" This was obviously Africa's purpose in exiting en bloc, if helter-skelter: to emphasize the dignity of the black man by undermining the international character of the event.

The issue for the Africans was the presence in Montreal of New Zealand, which earlier this month had sent a rugby team to play in racist South Africa. Sadly, despite the commendable motives of the Africans, their gesture is doomed to failure. And, what is worse, oblivion. For the most important black contingent, from a political perspective, the members of the United States team, remained in Montreal. Activists in the anti-apartheid movement query why *they* haven't left.

The answer is significant from several points of view. Just prior to the opening of the games, there was a plenary team meeting at which, as it was announced by the press secretary, the American athletes voted *unanimously* to stay and play, regardless of outside pressure. This decision was arrived at despite what an American spokesman referred to as considerable sympathy for the political position of the Africans. The Americans were there to compete, not debate.

The truth, of course, is never that simple. Despite the ultimate declaration without dissent, there were indeed American athletes both white and black who had expressed willingness to leave in support of the Africans. They were in part dissuaded by a very strong counterargument. Back in Mexico in '68, when Tommie Smith and John Carlos stood on the podium and raised their black gloves to protest American racism, they had no significant support from their African brothers. Who left the games when *they* were expelled?

And herein lies a second and more important lesson to be learned from the current incident at Montreal: the Africans left too soon.

The entire world—and not just sports freaks—vividly recalls the action of Smith and Carlos at Mexico City. They were winners, the focus of world attention or, more precisely, the television cameras. They wanted to communicate to the largest possible audience. And their upraised arms did just that. They chose the perfect moment for a political demonstration.

At Montreal, I am sad to report, the out-of-sight Africans are already out of mind. Virtually no one speaks of the absent continent. Thus who will remember the departure of such likely gold medalists as Mike Boit (Kenya), John Akii-Bua (Uganda) and Filbert Bayi (Tanzania)? And these three—who very much wanted to compete—could have broken world records en route to victory. What message will their non-presence convey?

The slogan of the '60s, "The whole world is watching," often turned out to be accurate. For a gesture to engrave itself on the conscience of mankind, it needs a giant theater and a global audience. This means the winners' stand, not an airport departure lounge.

In retrospect, we admire all the more the sheer brilliance of Tommie Smith's tactics in Mexico. Here at Montreal the whole world would again be watching as black Africans mounted the podium to be acknowledged Olympic champions. *Then* the glove of protest, *then* the dramatic refusal to accept a tarnished goal. And a chance to discourse at length to an avid collection of sensation-loving international press. There is no message without media.

But now at Montreal, it is already Olympics as usual.

Erich Segal

Mr. Segal, who covered the Olympics for ABC, is finishing a novel and will be visiting professor of Classics at Dartmouth.

Katharina Blum

German Parable

"Every generation must have its war, and since there is no war in Europe at this time the young are making their own." It was the summer of 1967 in Berlin when Ulli Lentz, then a medical student, made that observation about his peers as an explanation of the violent demonstrations spreading out from the long staid West German universities. It was the time when Ulrike Meinhof, one of the most gifted and thoughtful younger German journalists, turned to radical politics—a course that took her inexorably underground, where she was transformed into an urban terrorist. It was the period when Axel Caesar Springer, the conservative Hamburg press magnate, commanded his newspapers—the "serious" *Welt* and the blatant tabloid *Bild Zeitung*—to take the offensive as battle organs of the right wing. It was a moment when Heinrich Böll, the pacifist author, became physically ill over what he diagnosed as Germany's malady of the spirit.

The setting for this polarization on the fringes of German politics was most peculiar: the "big coalition" of the Christian Union parties headed by Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger and the Social Democrats headed by Vice Chancellor (and Foreign Minister) Willy Brandt. On the face of it, and in the parliamentary life of the *Bundestag*, there was peace and tranquility—ennui, too. Formal opposition was propounded only by

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the tiny Free Democratic Party. Labor strikes were prevented by continuing top-level union-management consultations presided over in virtually a corporate state manner by Economics Minister Karl Schiller. Traditional left-right antagonisms were suspended: No wonder young Germans rebelled against this ponderous establishment, as suffocating as one of those big, fluffy, feather German bedcovers. The rebellion was tagged the *APO*—acronym for the Extra-Parliamentary Opposition. The leaders talked mostly in a noisy jumble of catch phrases and academically oriented dogmas, mixing Marx with post-Freudian psychology, sociology and even touches of theology. When no one listened or comprehended they began planting bombs, robbing banks, shooting policemen and attempting kidnapping.

This is what formed the background for Heinrich Böll's novella, *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*, which has also become available to the public in the form of a film directed by Volker Schlondorff and Margaretha von Trotta. In many aspects the book and the film are caricatures—the warts on the face of Germany are magnified out of proportion, the features exaggerated. Böll, normally the gentlest of men, composed not so much a work of fiction as a polemical broadside. He was in a raging fury when he wrote it. Angry enough to kill. Indeed Katharina perpetrates his fantasy-desire: she shoots to kill the tabloid newspaper reporter who has been persecuting her. Böll's fury was ignited in 1972 when he himself became a momentary victim in a countrywide dragnet operation set to catch members of the Baader-Meinhof gang, a creation of Ulrike Meinhof and Andreas Baader, which they had dubbed the Red Army Faction. Platoons of police suddenly surrounded Böll's small stone farmhouse in the rolling Eifel hills southwest of Cologne. The author had published several articles pleading for tolerance and understanding toward the radicals; and this made him a "sympathizer" in the police and *Bild Zeitung* vocabulary. Thus Böll briefly became a prime suspect on the lists of Germans believed to be harboring Baader-Meinhof activists or, perhaps, even Red Ulrike herself.

In an anguished voice Böll called friends. "You've got to do something," he pleaded to my wife. "You must do something to stop this *Scheisse*." Later that year he went before the Social Democratic Party convention to speak on behalf of Chancellor Brandt, who was running for reelection in a strongly polarized atmosphere. He spoke about "violence"—particularly about the "violence" of the right-wing press embodied by the Springer papers against "decent citizens." His rage smoldered and flared until he produced Katharina Blum, who was also victimized for allegedly harboring a terrorist.

The film is engaging, even as caricature, because it casts its theatrically bright lights on dark corners of the German condition, illuminating them in stroboscopic flashes. There is, for instance, the older member of Katharina's circle of friends, who, alone, is spared the disgusting publicity splashed on them by the Springer-like *Zeitung* in pursuit of "terrorist" sensations. "I am an old Nazi," he says in explaining how he escaped the glare. "Maybe that's why they left me alone." Flash. It has been almost axiomatic in the bulk of the West German press to avoid dredging up the National Socialist past whenever it could be comfortably avoided. To do so was considered somehow to be in bad taste. It brings to mind a remark made three years ago by Annemarie Renger, president of the *Bundestag*, who came from an anti-Fascist family in Berlin and felt that stigma as a schoolgirl in the Hitler era. She observed that the West Germans had been "saved" from the hard business of national regeneration by the Cold War—plumped into the Western allied camp with a ready-made Constitution and a *Persilschein* (slang for the "whitewash" ticket handed out by Occupation authorities upon successful completion of de-Nazification procedures). "We saw we didn't have to change and could stay the way we were," Renger recalled.

There is also a flash in the moment when Katharina asserts that her "honor" has been insulted and robbed by the *Zeitung*. She stands accused of harboring Ludwig, a suspected "anarchist" she had met and loved for a night during a Karneval ball. Now she, her acquaintances and even her ailing mother are subjected to the sensationalist imputations of the tabloid. But "honor" in the German usage was, and still is to an extent, the private preserve of officers and gentlemen—of the aristocracy. A German *Herr* could complain of *Ehrenabschneidung*—deprivation of honor—and demand *Satisfaktion* through the courts or in a duel. But what "honor" did a woman, much less a housemaid like Katharina, possess, and where on German earth could she obtain *Satisfaktion*?

Then there is the whole fragility of the scene. After all, what kind of society is it that feels mortally threatened by a handful of urban terrorists—that plunges immediately into police-state practices, that raids the home of prize-winning authors at the slightest hint of subversion? Another stroboscopic flash. Beneath that *Wirtschaftswunder*, beneath all those commendable achievements of parliamentary democracy, of *Östpolitik*, of footing the bills for failing Italy, beneath the shiny Volkswagens and the Mercedes and the hardest of hard currencies, beneath the solid accomplishments of the Adenauers, the Brandts and the Schmidts—there is an underlying insecurity, a sense of living near a volcano, a feeling that all is somehow artificial, somehow not really *echt* German, 31 years after the war. That is the terror about the terrorists.

Ulrike Meinhof is gone, hanged by her own hand in a cell last spring. Virtually all of her underground comrades are either dead or behind bars. Yet the fearful men in Bonn and some of the state capitals are busy

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implementing the Radicals Decree, barring "anti-democrats" from civil service jobs. Over 400 have been blacklisted so far. They have just adopted new and more stringent anti-terrorist laws. The latest generation of West German university students is politically silent, being extreme only in its care not to rock the boat. They, too, are frightened—not of terrorists, but of being taken for anything resembling terrorists, even in a joke. All of this in the name of the *freiheitliche-demokratische Ordnung*—the free and democratic order, that is to say, law and order.

Moreover, the current election campaign is being fought out by Chancellor Schmidt and his opponent, Helmut Kohl, over who is the most successful conservative. The campaign keynote was sounded by the archetype right-winger, Franz Josef Strauss, who posed the choice as "Freedom Or Socialism." This was modified, so to speak, by Helmut Kohl, to "Freedom *Instead of* Socialism." Springer's papers are at it again, hammer and tongs, although it seems that his "serious" paper, *die Welt*, is being taken less seriously these days. Still, *Bild Zeitung* goes on, with its four million circulation apparently unimpaired, Springer's "mastiff" as he calls it.

Is it so surprising that Heinrich Böll got angry? Or that Willy Brandt despairs over having approved the Radicals Decree in January 1972? Germany, the land of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, has been undergoing ideological struggles for the last 500 years. But it seems that the cast of characters has only had to change costumes over the centuries—the arguments, the polemics are almost the same. Katharina Blum is only a vignette of that struggle, a cabaret sketch. Yet it does give us a glimpse of the fears and terrors of being German with the Karneval costumes of the post-war period in the *Bundesrepublik Deutschland.*

David Binder

Mr. Binder, diplomatic correspondent for *The New York Times*, wrote *The Other German: Willy Brandt's Life and Times* (New Republic Books).

Bella's Appeal

Albany Democrats at their annual barbecue were an ideal crowd to be worked by the Democratic candidates for senator from New York, and several of them wandered around in the heat, grabbing every hand that didn't have a hot dog or a chicken leg in it.

A woman rushed up to one of them. "Bella, Bella, Bella, Bella," she said. "Where's Ramsey Clark? I can't find him. I've lost Ramsey Clark. Where is he?"

Bella Abzug pointed to where she had last seen that particular rival, but afterward she puzzled over the request. After all, she was neither this woman's congresswoman nor, obviously, her choice for senator. Why should she have to find her damn candidate for her? "I don't think the situation was quite clear to her," Abzug said tersely.

What is even less clear is how a person can believe that a politician who does not represent her, and whom she does not even want to represent her, would feel an obligation to take care of her. Even Abzug, who works around the clock at being a fighting congresswoman, doesn't know how she managed that. But there it was: testimony to the fact that people believe Bella Abzug is fighting for them—whether they like her or not.

It means that one thing she has to do, as a candidate for statewide office, is to demonstrate a logical reason for her fighting spirit. When Abzug talks about her record in Congress, it's not just to show that she has one, but to remind people that she is fighting for causes, not for sport. "You're different from what I expected," a male voter told her recently. "Quieter. Calmer." He seemed relieved that she had said hello in response to his hello, instead of gratuitously punching him in the mouth.

"People are surprised when they meet me," she said. "They see that I'm a balanced human being, that I have a sense of humor, that I'm normal." Normal. In a race with such stylized candidates as Daniel Moynihan and James Buckley, Bella Abzug still has no problem competing for recognition. The superstar, instant-identification, larger-than-life, brand-name character has been thoroughly established in her six years as a congresswoman. Now she has to go in the other direction and prove that she is normal.

"I'm the strongest person in Congress," she says conversationally. "I've always been like this. I get it from my mother. She was a strong woman. If a teacher scolded me, my mother went to school and scolded the teacher." Her face is beaming with pride.

Wait a minute, congresswoman. You liked it when your mother made a scene in school? You didn't want to die? Don't you know children are supposed to be ashamed of their mothers, particularly—my God—if their mothers make themselves conspicuous?

A rare look of hesitation passed over Rep. Abzug's face. Unconvincingly, she conceded that perhaps there might have been a time when her mother's making a row didn't fill her with unalloyed pride. She hadn't taken into account the fact that modern normality is being ashamed of your mother. Bella Abzug's normality dates back to a time before that fine psychological dust settled over everyone's impulses, to when the normal thing was for a child to love its mother.

A normal day, for Rep. Abzug, is about 16 hours of work, made possible because she can take deep-sleep naps wherever and whenever she has a few moments' pause in her schedule. The idea that some people might

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have trouble sleeping in bed at night, let alone sitting up in a tiny, jerking airplane in mid-afternoon, is outside her experience. You might as well suggest that people could have trouble eating. She doesn't even have trouble dieting. She simply orders a strict, all-protein meal for herself, and then eats the potato salad from her aides' plates.

"I sleep like a baby," she says. "Clear conscience." But what it is, is more of that weird normality. She is asked about guilt, that universal modern emotion, at least among those who can afford it. Certainly one would expect a liberal voter in New York to spend a great deal of her emotional life worrying about guilt, itself a refinement of feeling guilt. Abzug looks slightly wary. Is this another trick idea, like the one about mothers? "Well, of course, everybody. . . ." No, not necessarily everybody. Don't you always feel that you've done the best you could, so why waste time worrying about it? "Oh, certainly."

And if that isn't odd enough, she is forced to admit that she never felt troubled about going against society's idea of how a woman should behave. She has to confess that she never had any trouble about putting forward herself or her ideas, declaring what was on her mind, asking others to support her beliefs. All this applies not just to the successful lawyer and congresswoman—it goes back to school days, back as far as she can remember. Then, as now, it never occurred to her that if she felt different from the entire society, there could be any explanation but that the entire society was mistaken. "People say I've changed. The world's simply caught up with me." What she was carrying on about all those years, you remember, and she doesn't hesitate to point out, was racial and sex discrimination, unjust warfare, government spying, White House corruption.

By her standards, the normal thing to do was to demand an immediate end to injustice, killing, discrimination, invasion of privacy, corruption. Hesitation, compromise, expedience—those things belong to the world of shadings and doubts. If a normal, healthy person sees something terribly wrong going on, wouldn't she naturally stand up and shout to everyone to stop this instant?

Sometimes Bella Abzug remembers that it's not standard to be normal any longer. Not that she really cares—that, of course, is the essence of it all. But her self-confidence stops just short of her husband's fond refrain when she gets off a crack that he particularly relishes. "Bella," he'll say, "you're too good for the People." She wants the People to vote for her. So she has an image. Images and fussing with them are not the occupation of a healthy person who has work to do. But she made a concession to the idea—it's her hat. You want images? she seems to say. I always wear a hat. See? Now, let's talk about issues.

But that business of getting elected means you have to think about how people see you. Maybe she shouldn't have referred to Jimmy Carter as "a closet Moonie." She puts her hand out to grab back the audience of rich Long Island supporters who may, for all she knows, be Carter's dearest supporters, too. "That's a joke," she adds. Another wait-a-minute moment comes after she has treated a carful of people to a hilarious battle with her husband over who tells the punchline to the story right. "Well, whatever we are, at least we don't try to hide anything," she adds. Another stop came after she answered my question about staff discontent with such a tirade of a denial that it became obvious that the question is not whether, but how she could tear apart an employee if she tried. This time, there was nothing to say—how can you apologize if you're never wrong?—so she just smiled a lot. An hour or two later, she had thought it over. Is it really a good idea for a politician to bawl out a reporter? The hell with that—a normal person expresses her feelings. "And don't you ever ask anything like that again!" she yells.

Judith Martin

Ms. Martin is a staff writer for *The Washington Post*.

White House Watch

Being Presidential

The President's second press conference at the White House in 11 days, after nearly five months with no press conferences in Washington, produced some wonderful pictures and in several other respects furthered his humiliating fight for his party's nomination in August. The pictures showed him standing, confident and laughing amid a gaggle of reporters, on the White House lawn with the north portico of the executive mansion in the background. His answers to questions played upon his incumbency, an asset that of late had not been as helpful to his candidacy as it is traditionally assumed to be. By inference, Mr. Ford compared his 27 years in national politics and government with Jimmy Carter's single term of four years as governor of Georgia. The whole affair reflected the conclusion, arrived at in recent weeks and forced upon the President and his advisers by his dim performance in the Republican primaries, that his best hope of nomination and election lies in his being as presidential as possible even when he's campaigning and, at this pre-convention stage, wheedling and bargaining for the absurdly few individual delegate votes that he needed in order to defeat Ronald Reagan for nomination on the first ballot in Kansas City.

A reporter's reference to the publicized and rather pretentious process of interviewing and pondering that

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preceded Carter's choice of Senator Walter Mondale to run with him for the vice presidency gave the President his shot at his opponent's relative inexperience. Mr. Ford said he'd been thinking about his own choice for some time and continued: "I know all of the individuals who are being considered very well. I have worked with them, known about them. . . . Therefore it won't be a last-minute analysis. It will be one based on a good many years of experience and opportunities to know how they performed in public office and otherwise."

Two other answers displayed the President in his first direct reaction to the Carter campaign and, as it turned out, having his first direct impact upon a Carter position. The indications in the Carter and Mondale acceptance speeches at the Democratic convention that the nominees planned to make issues of the Republicans' Watergate past and of Gerald Ford's pardon of Richard Nixon caused the President to abandon his hitherto flat opposition to legislation that would remove the main responsibility for investigating and prosecuting federal official wrongdoing from the Department of Justice and vest it in special prosecutors. Mr. Ford announced that he'd go along with the general approach if the President were authorized to appoint a single, permanent special prosecutor, subject to Senate confirmation, rather than the temporary prosecutors who under pending legislation might be chosen either by the Attorney General or, if he failed to act upon a complaint, by appellate courts. The change was a sign of awareness that any appearance of indifference to Watergate and its lessons could be fatal to a Ford candidacy.

When the President was reminded of Senator Mondale's explicit and Carter's implied criticism of the Nixon pardon and was asked whether he considered it a liability, Mr. Ford defended the pardon in the same stanch way he has ever since he granted it. "I decided to grant the pardon in the national interest," he said, and he finished his answer on a note of defiance: "I would do it again." At a press conference in Plains the next day, Jimmy Carter in effect swallowed his own implied criticism and repudiated Mondale's explicit criticism of the pardon. He said he still thought the pardon "ill-advised" and "improper" but wasn't going to make an issue of it in his election campaign. Comparing his view with the one asserted by Mondale at the New York convention, Carter said with a remarkably open touch of pragmatism: "I personally think my position on the pardon is preferable from a political viewpoint. The American people know who pardoned President Nixon. They know the circumstances involved in the pardon. They don't need it raised for political advantage and they would resent it if it was."

At the latest press conference and at the previous one, much probing for the President's thoughts about a vice presidential nominee produced no information whatever. The White House inquirer is told that private discussions of the subject with Mr. Ford are no more informative. Seven acquaintances of mine, five of them officials and two of them private citizens, who have talked about the matter with the President insisted in late July that they had no inkling of what he intended to do or even of whether he knew then, after the Democratic convention and nominations, what he was going to do. My impression was that if anybody around Mr. Ford really had some indication, it was staff chief Richard Cheney and he wasn't saying. A reporter's inquiries over the past several weeks did, however, elicit some interesting indications of what the President was hearing and of how he reacted to it.

The most interesting figure among those who talk about the President's own nomination problem and about his vice presidential problem with him is Vice President Rockefeller. The gist of his advice to the President and to all others who will listen is well known. It goes as follows: now that Jimmy Carter has been nominated, forget the South. Don't let Carter's choice of a prominent and committed liberal, Senator Mondale, for the vice presidency trap the Ford forces into alienating the moderate-to-liberal segment of the electorate by excessive damnation of Carter as a hidden liberal and of his ticket as a dangerously liberal one. Go for the North and Northeast, where most of the big blocs of electoral votes are. Go for the moderate-to-liberal majorities in those states (New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Massachusetts, etc.). That means—no Reagan, no Connally for the vice presidency, despite enormous convention pressures for such a nominee. It means the choice of a moderate middle-roader, middle perhaps to the point of being innocuous. Senator Howard Baker of Tennessee is cited as an example. Governor Dan Evans of Washington State, an able man who gets much less national notice than he deserves, is another acceptable prospect by this measure. The possibility that pro-Reagan delegates, whether declared for him or officially committed to the President, may be so insistent that they deprive Gerald Ford of his choice and force Reagan or Connally upon him is recognized by Rockefeller and by others who take the Rockefeller line. If this happens, they argue, let Mr. Ford be in a posture that makes it clear that the convention and not he has condemned the Republican party to electoral suicide.

How does Gerald Ford respond in such discussions, whether to the foregoing or to opposite advice? The answer provided by one participant in Oval Office talk about campaign problems is that the President doesn't respond. "With this President," says the acquaintance quoted here, "you don't *discuss* anything. You speak your piece, he listens, and that's all. You learn later, if at all, usually through somebody else or from what is done or announced, how he reacts to what you've said to him." It's not that Mr. Ford is rude or secretive, according to this account. It's simply that, except on matters about which he's already made up his mind

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when a point is broached, he is wary of instant decision and commitment and prefers to take his time.

It's especially interesting that Nelson Rockefeller is defending and supporting Gerald Ford as loyally and strongly as he is. Among the tensions at the Ford White House that were described in my last report, none is potentially more destructive and actually under better control than the tension between Rockefeller and the President. Rockefeller feels that his withdrawal last November from consideration for the vice presidential nomination was deliberately devised and forced upon him. He is convinced that Donald Rumsfeld, former White House staff chief and now Secretary of Defense, principally contrived the pressure in furtherance of his own ambition to be the nominee. Does Rockefeller hold the President fundamentally responsible? The answer heard in Rockefeller quarters is, *he allowed it to happen*. Yet the Vice President continues to do a better job of articulating Gerald Ford's claims to nomination and election than the President does.

John Osborne

John Connally

The Survivor

Poor Jake Jacobsen. He's the lawyer and old friend of John Connally who used to hang around the high rollers in Texas and Washington, DC—the people who deal in the politics of milk and oil and banking. But unlike his friends, the preeminent of whom has always been Connally, Jacobsen wasn't smooth and tough enough to survive. He got mixed up in a bank scandal and then a milk-money scandal. And now, as soon as the final legal details are cleared up, he will be called back to Washington to be sentenced for trying to bribe a public official.

Jake was the unlucky go-between whose job was to carry money from the San Antonio, Texas, headquarters of AMPI, the milk cooperative, to Washington and other places where politicians gather. He got caught in the Watergate net. The Watergate special prosecutor arranged a plea-bargain deal to get him out of an indictment in Texas. In return, Jacobsen agreed to help the prosecutor nail a recipient of AMPI money. Jacobsen confessed that he had given his friend John Connally—who at the time was Nixon's Treasury Secretary—$10,000 in exchange for Connally's help in getting an increase in subsidies for milk farmers. As part of the plea bargaining, Jacobsen pleaded guilty to bribery in Washington. Soon he will pay the price for that. Judge George Hart, Jr., who tried the Connally-Jacobsen case, says he will impose the sentence as soon as he gets word from the fifth circuit that it is finished with an appeal involving Jacobsen, which ought to happen any day.

Jacobsen's problem is that he let himself get caught in other peoples' schemes. That doesn't happen to John Connally. Jacobsen was an intermediary and not a principal in the wheeling and dealing; he resembles the type the organized crime world calls a "courier." The courier's job involves high risks and small rewards; it's not attractive, but nonetheless vital to the functioning of any crooked operation. The courier is the one who carries other peoples' cash to and fro. They are expendable. They rarely implicate the bosses, and when they do, their testimony often misses the mark. Defense lawyers can persuade juries that couriers are suspect; they are low rascals who can't be believed.

John Connally is another matter. He was acquitted about a year ago and resumed his political career almost without a pause. The jury was unpersuaded by the evidence. All the prosecutor could summon in the case against Connally was one firsthand witness—courier Jacobsen—and a set of Jacobsen's bank and hotel records, and a tape. But the tape was flawed. If you want to read the transcript, it can be found in the records for the *United States* v. *John Connally and Jake Jacobsen* at the US District Court for the District of Columbia. (Some of the other records are not on file; the clerk said they were missing. An official search is underway.) Most of the transcript is a conversation among Connally, Richard Nixon and a group of about six Nixon officials, including then Secretary of Agriculture Clifford Hardin, who was nominally in charge of milk subsidies. Connally, in a long but not very well informed monologue, made a pitch for increasing the milk subsidy. Nixon gave tacit assent, and then the meeting broke up. But one critical part of the tape was never made into a transcript, and thus never shown to the jury in a comprehensible form. It recorded a private conversation between Nixon and Connally after everyone else had left the room.

The prosecutor made a transcript of this section, but Connally and his expert defense attorney, Edward Bennett Williams, said it was inaccurate. Often in cases like this, the judge will allow both the prosecution and the defense to make a transcript and then ask the jury to decide which is correct. In this case, the judge sided with Connally and ruled that out. The prosecutor's transcript—which was kept secret, never given to the jury and released only after the trial was finished—showed that when the others had left the room, Connally gave Nixon this reassurance: "You made the right decision Mr. President." And then he allegedly said, "It's on my honor to make sure that, that, there, there's a very substantial allocation of oil in Texas that you, that, that will be at your, at your discretion." Nixon's reply: "Fine. . . ." The prosecutor claimed that by "oil" Connally meant "cash": more AMPI money was waiting for Nixon in Texas. But since Connally denied he had said the word "oil," the jury never heard the

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prosecutor's theory. (See "The Secret Trial of John Connally," by Fred Graham, *TNR*, June 21, 1975.) As far as the jury knew, the prosecutor and Connally were just squabbling over an obscure bit of wording in the tape—wording they never saw in print. Thus a critical piece of evidence was lost. According to the current special prosecutor, Charles Ruff, this crucial section of tape was never introduced as evidence in the trial. Ruff refused last week to let us listen to the tape on the grounds that it had not been admitted as evidence, even though the entire tape was played for the jury, including the last section. When the former special prosecutor, Henry Ruth, was asked about the tape, he declined to comment. "You believe in due process, don't you?" he asked. "I guess I should be a good boy. I'm going to be a good boy and not say anything." It is an ugly piece of debris from Watergate that everyone involved would like to forget.

Almost as soon as the not guilty verdict was in, John Connally resumed his stride. He celebrated the acquittal about a year ago with a "salute to John Connally dinner" in Houston, at which friends contributed nearly $400,000 to help defray his legal bills and give him a fresh start. Connally has come a long way since then. This month *The Wall Street Journal* reported that "some Ford advisers are talking up the idea" of a Ford-Connally ticket. "They say that the Texan is a good attacker, would help Ford in the South, especially now that Mondale is on the ticket." And *Newsweek* carried a note to the same effect, quoting a Ford staffer who said the President has "a thing about Connally." Ford isn't the only Republican with a soft spot for John Connally. Richard Nixon had a very close relationship with his Treasury Secretary, and indeed, had he followed Connally's advice on Watergate (build a bonfire in the Rose Garden and burn the tapes), he might still be in office. When Connally resigned from the Nixon team in 1972, Nixon told the press that "He [Connally] has been a tower of strength for the President." Now Nixon's successor feels the pull of Connally's magnetism.

In the months since his trial, while cementing his political bonds with the Ford administration, Connally has built a new, independent financial base for himself. With some of the money gathered at the salute-to-himself dinner, he founded an organization reminiscent of Rockefeller's Critical Choices Commission, called "Vital Issues of America." It has no members; just a boss—John Connally. He also set up a group this year called the "Citizens Alliance for Mediterranean Freedom." The latter accepts contributions from corporations and concerned Americans who wish to counteract the spread of communism in Italy and elsewhere around the Mediterranean. This summer it bought full-page newspaper ads warning about the possibility of a Communist victory in the Italian elections. Neither of these groups sought tax-exempt status, and therefore their records are not made public by the Internal Revenue Service. The corporate charter of Vital Issues, however, does allow the fund to make contributions to politicians, including its own officers, should one of them wish to run for public office. At one point last year it filed some papers at the Federal Election Commission (FEC) in Washington. But then, on the advice of FEC General Counsel John Murphy, it decided not to disclose the names of those who contributed to its fund, and not to supply any further information to the FEC. Murphy wrote a letter on September 26, 1975, to Vital Issues' attorney John Chapoton in which he said he didn't consider the group a political committee because it was primarily interested in "nonpartisan discussion on issues of public importance." But he warned Chapoton the group should not make any contributions to candidates unless it channeled them through a "separate segregated political fund" that *would* have to file reports at the FEC.

Rep. Michael Harrington (D, Mass.) has found what he feels is a conflict of interest between one of Connally's private and one of his public roles. Since March Connally has served as a member of the President's Advisory Board on Foreign Intelligence, the group that has full access to CIA and other intelligence files, and which has been assigned to end and prevent future CIA abuses of power. President Ford at first wanted Connally or Melvin Laird to chair the group, but both declined for personal reasons. Instead, he made Connally (and Connally's lawyer Edward Bennett Williams) part of the regular membership. None of these members, nor the chairman, is subject to congressional approval. Rep. Harrington points out that as a spokesman for the Citizens Alliance for Mediterranean Freedom, Connally represents a group of activist citizens—and some very large corporations—that wish to influence European politics. Harrington fears that Connally could use the information and influence he gains on the intelligence board to benefit his "citizens alliance" and the companies that belong to it. He would like Connally to quit one group or the other, for he thinks the situation could foster another scandal like the one involving ITT's intervention (with CIA knowledge) in Chilean politics. Harrington hasn't lodged a formal protest.

Meanwhile, Connally is lending his services to the Republican party and earning himself a secure place in the next administration, should it be Republican. Early this year he signed a fundraising letter that, according to the Republican National Committee, brought in more than $750,000 in contributions. He has been campaigning all around the country in behalf of the party—without endorsing Reagan or Ford—and gathered more money that way. Finally, he's made a series of five-minute TV spots to be broadcast in a nationwide fundraising campaign this summer.

Eliot Marshall

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What the Elections Didn't Decide

Inertia in Italy

by Michael Ledeen

The Italian political crisis continues, unresolved by the June elections. The situation is unlikely to improve before the fall, both because Italian politicians do not rush to solve their crises, and because the problems this time are considerable. The aging and embattled leaders of the Christian Democratic Party (DC) must deal with an increasingly desperate economic situation, meet a new challenge from the Communist Party (PCI), maneuver between the two superpowers deeply involved in Italian affairs and find a stable governing coalition in a general chaos that is so byzantine that Henry Kissinger admitted he could not understand it.

The seriousness of the election results is only now beginning to dawn on most observers, who originally viewed the gains by both the DC and PCI as helping to clear up political problems. In fact, the virtual elimination of the smaller parties (only the Socialists—the PSI—obtained the support of as much as nine percent of the electorate) means that mediation between the two ideologically opposed major parties has become more difficult than ever. The danger of a drastic shift in Italian policy has become more likely at the same time that foreign pressure is increasing. While the traditional economic shot in the arm that accompanies the influx of tourism during the summer will probably carry the country through the next several months, some very difficult decisions must be made soon. The autumn brings new salary negotiations with the major trade unions, and at the moment it is hard to see how the Christian Democrats can form a government strong enough to insist on the austerity measures most economists feel are necessary.

Both the urgency and the complexity of the Italian economic situation were underlined at the Puerto Rico meeting of the industrialized countries, where the "Italian question" was one of the central themes. The official national debt is currently $15 billion. Last year's trade deficit reached two billion dollars, despite a major reduction of imports. The inflation rate is speeding along at roughly 25 percent for 1976, and salaries have been substantially increased in several important sectors. All economic experts agree that Italy must undertake a massive anti-inflationary program even as it increases productivity and defends the currency. The formulas for such a program vary greatly according to the political views of the proponents. The left believes that the government must do better at collecting taxes, make the rich pay a higher share of the burden and guarantee jobs to all able-bodied workers. The right calls for an end to damaging strikes and a reduction in absenteeism, along with restrictions on raises in pay, price levels and cost-of-living increases now built in to all major contracts. Everybody agrees that production and exports have to be built up, and costly bureaucratic inefficiency eliminated.

In most Western economies these problems are treated with a variety of measures in both the public and the private sectors. One of Italy's unique problems, however, is that the private sector has been virtually eliminated. Insofar as it exists, it consists of a handful of giant firms that, like Fiat, have sufficient strength to fend for themselves. The rest of the economy depends on favors from the political parties. Businesses trading with the Soviet bloc and the Third World tend to be tied to the PCI or the PSI, while most others draw upon state funds and participate in the inefficiency, graft, client relationships and stifling bureaucracy that all characterize the DC-run public sector.

Most observers have posed the Italian dilemma as if it were primarily an economic crisis (combined with questions of efficiency and honesty), which in turn hinges on the entry or exclusion of the PCI into the government. This is a considerable overstatement of the real power that derives from holding cabinet posts, and tends to ignore the great role the PCI already holds in policy making. The Communists have considerable strength in local and regional governments, the trade unions, the cooperatives, the press and the cultural institutions, from schools and universities to cinema, television and theater. They virtually define the popular culture, and their actual share of power is much greater than that of some of the parties that have frequently held control of ministries.

For at least a year the PCI has had the best of both worlds. When governmental measures succeed, the Communists rightly take credit for having helped them do so; when programs fail, they damn the DC for ineptitude and inefficiency. They hold a veto over all social legislation, and have orchestrated their public positions in such a way as to appeal to all groups, both in Italy and abroad. A typical example of PCI rhetoric emerged during the last days of the election campaign, when party economics expert Giorgio Napolitano told

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Washington Post reporters that the Communists were quite prepared to support austerity measures for the working class in return for substantial foreign loans, while Party Secretary Enrico Berlinguer announced the following day that his party would never ask the workers to pay the price of DC failures. Like all successful political parties, the PCI has managed to broaden its appeal by recourse to vagueness, and while this often irritates some of the old guard, it has been a highly effective tactic. The current phase in Italian political maneuvering is therefore characterized by a DC attempt to make the Communists pay a high political price for more formal participation in the government, at the same time the Christian Democrats seek to present themselves as a party with new faces and new programs.

The DC leaders know that Italians are fed up with years of corruption and inefficiency. The last elections showed that the shift to the PCI is not a passing phenomenon. The DC consequently has decided to adopt a strategy of offering formal collaboration with the Communists on a broad economic program, while at the same time attempting to form a stable governing coalition with the Socialists. The recent decision to offer the presidency of the Chamber of Deputies to the Communists demonstrates the willingness of the Christian Democrats to grant some formal power to their opponents and also acts as a spur to the Socialists (who previously held the position). Moreover, the selection of Pietro Ingrao—for years excluded from the inner circles of the PCI for his intransigent advocacy of revolution and his opposition to the *compromesso storico* proposed by Berlinguer—as Chamber President should help remove the Socialists' oft-repeated objection to joining a government excluding the Communists. Ingrao's presence also makes it easier for the Communists to support an austerity program, if that is what they finally decide to do.

These maneuvers may well prove decisive for the future of Italy. The Christian Democrats are faced with a challenge from a party that is more modern, better organized, better financed and better disciplined than they. The Communists have acquired a momentum that at times seems irresistible. The DC warned the electorate last month that a big PCI vote might drive the country out of the Western orbit and into the embrace of the Russians. The Vatican participated actively in a campaign designed to stop the Communist advance on the left and recover votes from the right. This strategy failed, despite the big DC vote. The Christian Democrats gained at the expense of the center, with some pickups on the right, while the Communists continued to expand.

It should come as no surprise that the United States and Germany are talking about a new Marshall Plan for Italy. Like its predecessor, this is conceived as much within a psychological and political context as in the purely economic sphere, and is intended to bolster the DC and the other non-Communist forces. Italy has been told that the West is willing to pay a price for a stable non-Communist government, but the Italians will have to show signs of vitality and goodwill. Kissinger and Schmidt believe that Italy is destined to pass into Communist hands unless substantial reforms are undertaken. They further feel that a demonstration of the advantages of belonging to the Western bloc may convince Italians that a "leap into the blue" of a Communist government is unnecessary and dangerous.

This theory rests on the belief that Italians vote Communist because of the worsening economy, and that if conditions improved (and the government worked better), the Communist vote would slack off. This is itself a suspect assumption (althoagh every American President since Woodrow Wilson has believed it) and ignores the extent to which Communist strength is now independent of the fluctuations of the economy. (One leading Communist told me that in his opinion the masses had no sense of the economic crisis, and that he had been quite surprised by the pro-Communist vote.) Furthermore, as a strategy designed to reduce Communist strength it has a potentially fatal weakness: the Communists themselves can certainly guarantee its failure if they wish and might be able to claim credit for its success.

This will be a difficult decision for the Communists. For decades they have told their faithful that Communist participation in public policy would produce immediate gains for the working class. They have pointed out the tax evasions of the rich and the misery of the rising numbers of unemployed, laying the blame on the industrialists and their political allies. Can the PCI now execute an abrupt about-face and ask the trade unions to enforce austerity on their rank-and-file? Communist economists have said over and over that the crisis could be resolved without exacting a high price from the workers, by increasing tax collections and pruning the bureaucracy. If they now endorse an economic program drafted in Bonn and Washington, they risk alienating considerable numbers of their supporters, who might be tempted to move leftward to the two parties that recently won 10 seats in the Chamber.

Leading Communists are divided over this question. One party official told me that in the end the PCI would have no choice but to support some sort of austerity program. They would do so, he said, because circumstances demanded it, and because the PCI would thereby gain a degree of legitimacy it badly needed. The Communists would in effect act as guarantors for a Western program for Italy. This might produce the ironic result that the new Marshall Plan would bring about the very thing its creators most fear: a strengthening of Communist credibility and respectability. At this moment, the Communist decision is

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unknown, perhaps because it has not yet been formulated; another leading Communist said that the PCI would commit suicide if it endorsed such a program, because it would thereby betray its own principles and offend its own supporters.

It is perhaps for such reasons that Kissinger has spoken recently about the need to coordinate Western trade policies with the Soviet Union. While it is possible to imagine Italian Communists supporting an aid program for their own country, it is not likely that they would act in concert with other Common Market members and the United States to drive tougher trade bargains with the Russians. There are limits to the PCI's purely Western face, and their opponents will be trying to exploit these limits in the months ahead. The Christian Democrats and their Western supporters hope to be able to offer the PCI a series of Greek gifts: formal participation in making decisions that will increase internal tensions within the Communist party, and force the Communists to make unpleasant decisions that would alienate some of their supporters.

The key to all these strategies is, alas, the PSI. The Socialists are in a desperate state, their ranks thinned by the elections, their morale low, their leaders more confused than ever. Having called for greater Communist participation, they find that the voters heeded their call, but the new Communist blood flowed from Socialist veins. The PSI has long opposed the *compromesso storico* because a government formed by the DC and PCI would have little need of a Socialist component. Now the Socialists find themselves on the horns of a fatal dilemma: if they continue to call for a government of the left, they will be swallowed by the Communists, while if they enter a new coalition with the DC they risk being used (as they have been in the past) as a sop to the left. The Socialists can ensure a stable coalition, but they cannot promise that their participation will make a new economic program work. The trade unions do not listen to the Socialists as they do to the Communists, and the industrialists are hardly disposed to embrace a party that calls for reform one day and revolution the next. Socialist participation in a new coalition would, in effect, be a public admission of past sins, and an act of contrition. In order for that to take place the present leadership would probably have to resign, and a more clearly anti-Communist group would have to replace it.

Leading Socialists recently told me that this change was underway, but that it would take lots of time. It is clear that sometime in the next few months the DC will propose a new economic program and ask the other parties to endorse it. If the Socialists support the Christian Democrats, they can compel the PCI to make the hard decisions they would prefer to avoid or postpone. If the Socialists reject the DC offer, there are two possibilities, both exceedingly dangerous for the PSI: the Communists might support the program, thus cutting the Socialists completely out of the picture, or the Communists could reject the program, thus precipitating new elections, which would most likely intensify the polarization of the electorate at the expense of the Socialists. If these scenarios look like "The Perils of Pauline," it is because the PSI has tied itself to the railroad tracks, without a hero on the horizon to ride to the rescue.

The most ironic aspect of the Italian crisis is that most leading industrialists think that the nation's problems can be solved without a massive infusion of foreign aid. The recent devaluation of the *lira* has put Italian products on a more competitive ground in the West, while Italy has carved out a substantial chunk of the trade with the OPEC countries and the Third World. Italian exports are still in great demand, and Italian businessmen are among the most enterprising in Europe. The most serious problem in the past has been the inability of Italy's businesses to guarantee delivery and services on time. Strikes, both in the factories and in the transportation sector, have thrown production and delivery into an even greater chaos than usual. If absenteeism could be reduced, and if strikes could be brought under control, the chances are good that the economy would show signs of life. Foreign money is needed—but in quantities far lower than those most commonly discussed—to defend the *lira* and to finance industrial expansion. Leaders of the leading business organization, the *Confindustria*, say, when asked, that the country is economically viable but politically desperate. For here again, as in every other aspect of the crisis, the PCI plays a crucial role.

If the Communists were genuinely interested in the economic recovery of the country—regardless of the political cost to themselves—they could simply call for greater responsibility on the part of the trade unions at the same time they insist on revamping the bureaucracy. They have not done this for the simple reason that they are now in a position to exact a political price from the Christian Democrats for taking such a stance. Such calls, as the British experience clearly demonstrates, come from left-wing parties in power, not from a left in opposition, and there is no reason to expect that the clever politicians currently guiding the PCI will depart from this successful strategy.

What will come of all this? In Italy, inertia is the most powerful force, and the likelihood is that none of the more dramatic possibilities will come to pass. The DC will probably not be able to reform itself. The PSI will probably not be able to adopt a coherent strategy, and the PCI will probably not be faced with the difficult and dramatic decisions that the DC would like to force upon it. Then, as many fear, the stalemate will continue, and sometime in the next year or two, foreign journalists will be treated once again to a vacation in Rome to witness another general election, and we will again wonder if the moment has arrived for the Communist party to be voted into office for the first time in history.

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Uncommon Strengths, Some Weaknesses

Mondale's Mixed Reviews

by Roger Morris

By many standards he is the most gifted and decent man available, better than we had a right to expect from the slick expedient calculus of the Carter run, probably brighter than any national Democratic candidate since Adlai Stevenson. On the basis of his remarkable record in Congress, there were substantial reasons for most Democrats to welcome so enthusiastically the nomination of Minnesota's Sen. Walter F. Mondale for Vice President.

Yet beyond the cheers of an appeased convention and an admiring press, there should also be a tempering realism, and perhaps even a bit of foreboding, about the selection. The weaknesses of Mondale the politician may be obscure for the moment, but they are real enough. Those flaws could be more decisive in the vice presidency than they have been in the Senate, disappointing the hopes of many that the office could house a liberal conscience of the Carter administration as well as the heir apparent. In a larger sense, Mondale represents a haunting paradox for Democrats: the limits and fatigue of conventional liberalism along with its best qualities of competence and compassion. His elevation to national prominence could precipitate some historic questions about the course of American politics and ultimately about the survival of the Democratic party.

Whatever his future, Mondale's 12 years in the Senate have already earned him, at only 48, a quiet greatness. He has been in the forefront of nearly every measure of humane and progressive legislation since the mid-'60s. More than any other Democrat, it has been Mondale who was the steady voice of the poor and powerless while Vietnam and then the Nixon Reaction turned the country away from reform. The saving of legal services for the poor, his hearings on migrant labor, initiatives in Indian education, major new proposals in early childhood development and national day care, the seminal consumer protection acts in auto safety and meat inspection, legislation in health, education, environmental safeguards, pension reform, rural development, hunger, aid to the elderly—even a partial list of Mondale's work is a roll call of the best of congressional politics over the last decade. His ultimate distinction, however, was as the enduring conscience of racial justice at a time when much of the nation and his own party pretended the problem was solved after the partial gains of the early civil rights revolt. As Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity, a job he actively sought despite its obvious political dangers, Mondale almost singlehandedly held back the tide of anti-busing bills in the Congress. He is at pains to point out now, of course, that he has never been an advocate of busing in itself, and that his work on the select committee was to end discrimination "where the courts find it" and to uphold the law. But behind the intellectual and political distinction is the man's undeniable commitment to equal rights. His public statements on the great unmentionable, untouchable shame that lies beneath the busing issue and still mocks American justice—residential segregation—offer a damning contrast to the shallow evasions of his new running mate on "ethnic purity."

Mondale also has an admirable record on some of the lonelier issues of national priorities and institutional reform. He led a vain fight to challenge the Space Shuttle, NASA's dubious and costly excuse for a manned spaceflight mission after the moon shots left a bloated bureaucracy with no plausible reason for being. He was more successful in opposing a similar multi-billion dollar expansion of the navy's nuclear carrier fleet; there his sensible arguments about cost and mission eventually even persuaded conservatives like Barry Goldwater (R, Ariz.) on the Senate Armed Services Committee. More recently, Mondale led the potentially far-reaching reform of the Senate filibuster rule and played an active role on the Select Senate Committee investigating the abuses of the intelligence agencies. Intelligence Committee sources credit Mondale, for example, for most of the revelations of FBI domestic spying, and not least for a dogged struggle within the committee to get out a full account of the CIA intervention in Chile.

He has accomplished all of this in Washington with a style and agility that have won him the admiration even of his opponents and, probably more important, the almost universal respect of staff people, who tend to be almost universally disdainful of their congressional employers. It is difficult to find a Senate or House aide who has dealt with Mondale, whether Democratic or Republican, committee or personal staff, who does not rank him among a handful of outstanding people on the Hill. In part, the praise is for his swift and transparent

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intelligence, a mind that seizes the point and stays with it, in contrast to the dim ramblings of so many of his colleagues. And adding to that impression is a thoroughly cynical, often sarcastic wit that Mondale can turn on his lesser peers, politics in general, and occasionally, on himself. Many who know Mondale come away with an appealing image of a serious man who nonetheless does not take himself or his politics too seriously. It is this informality and cynical edge that explain more than any other factors Mondale's extraordinary popularity with the Washington press, an asset that should prove invaluable in the coming campaign. The wit and the apparent candor probably soften the ideological color of Mondale's own actions. More telling, it is a style that invites the journalist into a kind of instant intimacy and rapport, the kindred spirit of jaundice and duty with which much of the Capital press corps affects itself. There is no doubt that some reporters see in Mondale the good, no-illusions politician they would be themselves if the roles were reversed. In any event, the infatuation of the press with Mondale can be embarassing. Recent examples include the puff-ball interview floated up to the candidate by *Newsweek* (July 26), and *The Washington Post* editorial the day after the nomination, a badly strained argument that applauded Mondale for "independence" in continuing to support the Vietnam war despite constituent pressures, and then praised him for "a willingness to abandon lost causes" in quitting the presidential race in 1974.

Mondale's political successes in the Senate, however, have been less a matter of personality or a favorable press than careful, cautious tactics. Studiously prepared, sensitive to the peculiar internal politics of committees where he excells in quiet argument, ever ready to avoid confrontation or a too obvious victory that could cost him on another issue with the fragile ego of his adversaries, ready too for compromise or graceful defeat when the votes are not there, he is above all a man of the "club." "He knows where the bodies are buried," says one colleague, "but Fritz won't dig them up and let it stink in your face." Almost alone among senators equally liberal or in some cases even less so—men like George McGovern, Fred Harris, William Proxmire—Mondale has always been perceived as the more reasonable and moderate, and therefore as the more effective. "He believes in what he does," explains a former aide to Mondale, "yet that does not get in the way of playing by the rules." Another assistant said, "Mondale is the supreme pragmatist." Both the reality and the reputation have left Mondale with no real enemies or scarring battles in Congress despite the seemingly inevitable controversy in much of what he has done.

The other side of the cultivated politics in the Senate has been even greater attention to his home base in Minnesota. It is not only faithful and efficient service to constituents, but also nearly weekly trips back to the state to stay in touch with various elements of his constituency, and simply to be seen there and caring about the folks back home. It has been for Mondale, as for any hardworking politician, a brutal life in many respects; too many absences from wife and children, too many nights spent in motels from Minneapolis to the Canadian border, too many boring meetings and bad speeches for a young sophisticated senator with great causes to pursue back in Washington. But Mondale has been able to do it, and do it well, because he accepts that as the established price of political office much as he accepts the twisted, often insanely incompetent methods of the Senate as the price of his role there.

Liberal as Minnesota is by comparison with other states, there is a natural gap between its sometimes provincial conservatism and the leftward pull in Washington, and Mondale has negotiated that, too, without stumbling. In his second campaign for reelection in 1972, after eight years of consistently liberal positions in the Senate, private Mondale polls showed that a sizable percentage of Minnesota voters regarded him as "conservative."

The media myth of small-town origins is already fastening on Mondale, and it threatens to obscure an important reality of the man and his politics. Like so many in his generation, Mondale left home for college and never really returned. The formative experience of his political career, his law practice, his social and economic expectations, were all clearly centered in middle-class Minneapolis-Saint Paul in the late 1940s and 1950s. His political base was not in any region or independent power of money or accomplishment, but in dutiful, ladder-climbing service in the Democratic-Farmer-Labor organization in Minneapolis. Having worked for Hubert Humphrey's Senate campaign in 1948, he carefully expanded his contacts in the growing DFL establishment, and after managing Orville Freeman's 1958 campaign for governor, he was appointed state attorney general in 1960, won election on his own in 1962, and was appointed to the Senate to fill Humphrey's seat in 1964 at the age of 36. It was, in short, an impressive testimonial to the virtues of following the system and staying acceptable. Mondale was and remains essentially one of the organization men of that period of politics. "Fritz was always," as one Minnesota observer put it, "well scrubbed, well liked, and well covered."

It is difficult to say how much the mentality and methods of Mondale's rise affected his stand on issues in the Senate, though his background clearly governed his subdued political style. The DFL was, after all, a remarkably strong, progressive coalition and in support of most of Mondale's positions on social questions. Free of any significant racial problem of its own, the state did not push Mondale to take the lead on civil rights

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subjects, but its relative neutrality also allowed him to do so with an impunity enjoyed by few other senators. There was no comparison, for example, between the opposition Mondale encountered on the busing votes and the price paid by Sen. Edward Kennedy for standing on the issue with his Boston constituents. As it happened, however, Mondale's organizational ties did in a sense ensnare him on the most important single issue of his Senate career—the war in Vietnam. His refusal to break with the Johnson administration despite early doubts, his continued silence through the 1968 campaign in obeisance to his patron Humphrey, was, as he now puts it himself, "the worst mistake of my political career." (In typically extravagant accounts after his nomination, several press reports credited Mondale with "early opposition" to the war, to which Mondale's former Minnesota colleague Eugene McCarthy aptly added, "early 1969.")

If Mondale's *mea culpa* on Vietnam rings true—and there can be little doubt that anyone of his intelligence and human feeling did not eventually see the war for what it was—there are still some who worry that he could someday find himself again in a situation where organizational or personal loyalty could overpower his independence. Foreign policy is the conspicuous weak spot in Mondale's record, and in his own sense of self-confidence. In the last three years he has turned perceptibly to the right on national security issues, voting for the B-1 bomber that he once opposed, reversing his support for the Mansfield amendment to reduce troops in Europe, and despite his sobering education on the Church committee, continuing to support CIA covert intervention abroad, albeit only "in the national interest." In large measure, his weakness in foreign affairs stems from the common insecurity of homegrown American politicians in the field. For all his sophistication in domestic affairs, Mondale, like many of his colleagues, remains somehow in awe of the phony mystique of foreign policy, and in turn of the authority of the Washington-New York establishment that has dominated US diplomacy since 1945. The foreign policy advisers he assembled for his brief abortive presidential run were all the worn names of the Kennedy-Johnson years, men like Cyrus Vance, George Ball, Paul Warnke and Zbigniev Brzezinski. "Mondale wouldn't even think of calling in the equivalent people on a domestic issue," said one concerned supporter, "which would be like using the Hoover cabinet to advise you on employment." Another Senate aide contrasted the tight reasoning of Mondale statements on economic or social issues with his positions on the B-1 or troop reductions in Europe. "Give him that kind of bullshit for a speech on jobs or education and he'd sneer you out of the room. In foreign policy he just seems to figure it must be true because the big names say it is."

Even in domestic affairs, however, there are lingering doubts about Mondale's stamina if not his knowledge and judgment. "Basically he loses interest," said one associate who has gone through several Senate fights with Mondale. "It's the disease of the cynic." There is no easy agreement among those who know Mondale well how much his flagging interest in specific issues may be expedience, intellectual fatigue or simply realistic abandonment. But according to several sources covering most of Mondale's Senate years, a cycle of enthusiasm, devotion and eventual indifference has been repeated in a number of areas from consumer affairs to the Space Shuttle to migrant labor. The common, and critical, contrast is to Proxmire, who, though less admired by his colleagues, has a record of far greater persistence on long-run questions like Pentagon spending. "It's just not Fritz's style to grab a problem and squeeze until somebody gives up," says a long-time Minnesota observer. "Of course if Hubert had taken that approach on civil rights, we'd still probably have segregated toilets at the Democratic National Convention."

Measured against the overall accomplishments of the man, that criticism seems for the most part harsh and trivial. When he is judged against most of his peers, Mondale need have no apologies. The more ominous problem is not his retreat on this issue or that, but the larger weakness and irrelevance of the conventional politics he symbolizes. What seems lacking in this careful, brilliant record is another sort of realism, a real sense of the hypocrisy of the system, the self-compromise of men like Mondale, and the extent to which accommodation only fortifies what the reformer is trying to change. Too often lost in the cynicism and resignation is the crucial difference between useless sacrifice and principled leadership. It would be reassuring in that sense, particularly after the Vietnam episode, to know that Mondale had just once fallen on his sword, that somewhere he was not so "well liked or well covered."

But in the end, if he has stopped short of following through many of his concerns it was less from lack of courage or energy than from a more profound ideological weakness. For most of Walter Mondale's great causes—migrants, black schoolchildren, the chronically unemployed, the sick and the poor and the powerless—have taken him right up to the threshhold of something beyond the liberal orthodoxy that has been his political creed, and beyond the genteel reformism of the economic and social interests governing his world from Minneapolis to the Senate to Madison Square Garden. On the other side of that threshhold are answers that involve far more than humane tinkering with the system. At root, as he surely senses, the questions of race and poverty and public priorities go to how this country is organized and who really rules it. But those are the issues that not even the Mondales—the best of the political system—seem willing or able to face.

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Arts and Lives

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Laff Time

Sumer is icumen in, lhude sing ye Hollywood cuccu. Three Hollywood cuckoos, in fact, all of whom have come up with parodies of Hollywood.

With Mel Brooks, the *auteur* of *Blazing Saddles* and *Young Frankenstein*, this is no surprise. What does surprise pleasantly is that *Silent Movie* (20th Century-Fox) is his best picture to date. That's limited praise, surely, still this is his most organic film, the least desperately outrageous. No one sequence stands out like the punching of the horse in *Saddles* or the monster-doctor vaudeville routine in *Frankenstein*, but those were highlights amidst messy frenzy. *Silent Movie* takes a comic line and hews to it fairly consistently, fairly inventively.

Some viewers have assumed that, by making a silent film, Brooks is automatically challenging Chaplin and Keaton, particularly since he also plays the leading role. Having just re-seen Keaton's *The Cameraman* (1928), which confirmed my belief that he is a major figure in the history of American art, I wouldn't have thought to use the Keaton standard for Brooks or even that Brooks was inviting comparison. He is simply pursuing his parodic way—last time monster pictures, this time silent slapstick, next time maybe Ingmar Bergman. Like all parody, it's a form of homage, but that's not the same thing as competition. The only question is whether the parody amuses.

I liked *Silent Movie* from the first thing I saw. On the screen appears, unaccompanied by music, the large word "Hello." Aggressively friendly but disarming. Then come the titles, over a lively John Morris tune on which changes are rung throughout. The first shot is Mel Brooks driving through Hollywood in a little yellow sports car, accompanied by his buddies Marty Feldman and Dom DeLuise. The three friends in that car form the leitmotif of the picture. DeLuise is adequate, but I simply don't understand Brooks' attachment to Feldman. What is funny about exophthalmia? Feldman has no other distinguishing attributes. The script gives him the Harpo Marx trait of girl-chasing, but with the repellent Feldman it has no charm or humor.

That script is by Brooks, Ron Clark, Rudy DeLuca and Barry Levinson. Brooks plays a film director—called Mel Funn—who used to be big, hit the alcohol skids, and is trying to make a comeback by making a silent movie. A producer, Sid Caesar, tells Brooks that if he can get stars, he can make the picture. He and his pals go to see five stars—unbilled, who do "cameos"—gets them, makes the picture despite the efforts of a powerful conglomerate, Engulf and Devour, to thwart him even after the picture is finished. The idea of slapstick about slapstick is at least 50 years old (Chaplin's *The Circus*), but it's still a nicely convoluted gimmick.

None of the picture made me double up with laughter (which I haven't done since the first half of *The Sunshine Boys*), still there are some good sight gags. (One running gag: an old newsvendor cowering before the increasingly brutal truckman who tosses bundles of papers from his truck.) Some of the intertitles are as good as the silent films' best. (Caesar, in the hospital, is asked how he feels: "Oh, I'm all right, except for the constant pain.") But I didn't laugh at the picture as much as I just *liked* it. Even when gags go on too long, like Brooks and friends in armor in a studio commissary, *Silent Movie* has the feeling of goodhearted spoof. And most of this comes from Brooks himself. Up to now his screen performing has been blasted by life-of-the-party mania. But here the absence of language seems to have forced him back, not on technical excellence, which he doesn't have, but on his personality. What holds this picture together is that Brooks comes across as—yes, I was surprised, too—rather sweet.

Bernadette Peters, who plays his torch-singer heartthrob, would be the poor man's Madeline Kahn except that the poor man already has Kahn. Harold Gould, a good "straight" actor, shows himself very capable at physical comedy. In an extended bit with another man and a jacket, Gould has the absorption, the ability to make difficulties grow, that mark a real clown.

If you see *Buffalo Bill* and this picture, you'll get an object lesson in the way a cinematographer can change style. In *Bill* Paul Lohmann supplied the soft-edged mistiness that Altman likes; in *Silent Movie* Lohmann gets exactly the wide-eyed shadowless look that farce needs. (But the color is an insurmountable problem. Every inch of the way it

(continued on page 33)

Films Worth Seeing

All the President's Men. How to make a film out of non-filmic material. Anyway it's a *Schadenfreude* treat.

Jackson County Jail. Slick chick plunges suddenly into an underworld. Fast and frightening. Try to ignore the corny satire on American corn.

One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest. Jack Nicholson fine in a phony social-political allegory set in a mental hospital.

Seven Beauties. Lina Wertmüller's flawed but powerful tragic farce about Italians in WW II.

SK

NEWSWORTHY

THE JOY OF SPORTS

End Zones, Bases, Baskets, Balls, and the Consecration of the American Spirit

Michael Novak

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SUMMER MYSTERY ISSUE

THE ISSUE IS MURDER

Agatha Christie

Murder and Class

It must have been the heady atmosphere of those World War II days that made Edmund Wilson mount a frontal assault at one of the mainstays of Western civilization. "Who cares who killed Roger Ackroyd," he thundered in the title of his essay denigrating detective fiction. But having discharged this salvo the eminent critic must have been seized by some inner doubts. Obviously hundreds of thousands have cared, the vast legion of readers who for 300 pages have struggled with the plethora of clues, only to be left dazzled and emotionally drained by the astounding conclusion of Agatha Christie's masterpiece. Wilson thus beat a retreat to a higher, supposedly safer, ground: "Friends," he wrote, "we represent a minority but Literature is on our side . . . There is no need to bore ourselves with this rubbish." But this maneuver left him even more vulnerable. The masses don't buy and certainly don't read boring books, that is unless they have been certified as Literature by eminent critics. Wilson's last desperate move was a traditional one for those who run out of reasoned arguments: call for repression. He would have detective fiction proscribed: ". . . and with the paper shortage pressing on all publication, and many first rate writers forced out of print, we shall do well to discourage this squandering of this paper which might be put to better use."

Fortunately his impious suggestion

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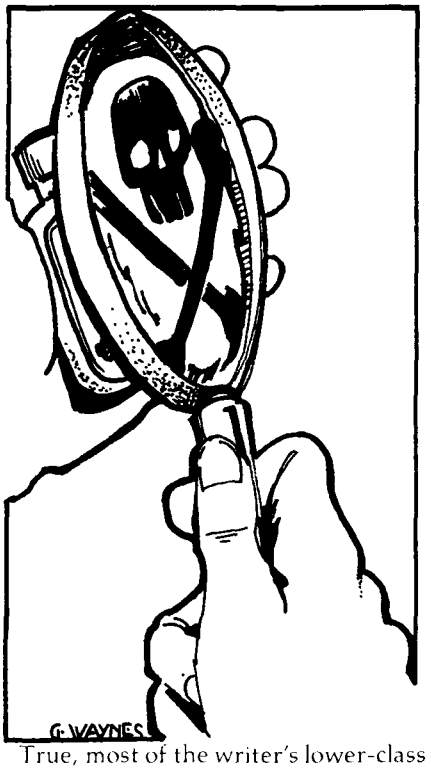
remained unheeded. Where would we be now, how could we have survived the alarms and anxieties of the Cold War, the Great Society, and the Greening of America without the distraction and solace of the mystery novel? As against senseless violence that surrounds us on all sides, this novel is an oasis of *sensible violence*: fictional, orderly and intellectually stimulating.

Some indeed would still make us feel guilty for spending a few hours with a mystery. Here, say those killjoys, the world is threatened by the Bomb, overpopulation, exhaustion of natural resources. It behooves every citizen to become thoroughly alarmed about the terrible dilemmas that confront us rather than to waste his time by enjoying himself. Our reading matter should be chosen so as to enhance our anxieties. If you grow weary of those endless and repetitious books on Issues, then you ought to relax constructively by reading the revelations about horrible misdeeds of our past and present politicians or sexual aberrations and transgressions of the famous in all fields. But how does it help us to read just for pleasure?

Yet quite apart from being tiresome, our moralists miss the point. In addition to being fun, the mystery novel has a lot to teach us about the modern world. This novel has always been a force for progress. Who can forget Sherlock Holmes' understanding attitude toward an interracial marriage, the sympathy with which he treats Russian freedom fighters against Tsarism? Few who have immersed themselves in Agatha Christie's immortal work can miss her close affinity to many of the advanced causes of our own day. Take her militantly democratic spirit. To a superficial reader, this statement might appear absurd. Isn't a classical Christie story woven around a country house tittle-tattle interrupted only by servants bringing in brandy and soda, and the thud of falling corpses? Precisely! Only a writer with a profound sympathy for the underprivileged would make her typical murderer an upper-or upper-middle-class person.

To be sure your detective story hater will not give up easily: isn't the real reason for Dame Agatha's preference for the rich and/or well-born criminal her conviction that the lower classes are as a rule too stupid and unimaginative to plan an interesting murder? In support of this unworthy accusation he will cite such passages from her writing as, "This sordid murder of an old woman in a back street shop was so like the usual type of crime reported in the newspapers that it failed to strike a significant note." Yet this is far from being evidence of snobbery.



True, most of the writer's lower-class characters are portrayed, with the exception of a few of the proverbial old faithful retainers, as rather imbecilic, and, well, common, prone to dishonesty, and, especially if maid-servants, to vulgar promiscuity. Yet the attentive and perceptive reader will see immediately that such stereotypes add up to a burning indictment of the class society that was the England of the author's time. How else, except by donning a mask of stupidity and servility could one obtain and keep a position as a domestic servant at the time of the high unemployment of the 1920s and 1930s? What other means of supplementing your inadequate wages except for the occasional pilfering of your mistress' jewels? To obtain the full measure of the social protest concealed in her work, one must compare Christie's typical manservant with that of her great rival, Dorothy Sayers. The latter's Bunter is portrayed as a man of great intelligence, fully capable, one should think, of going into the detective business on his own. Yet such is his servile acquiescence in his station in life that Bunter is stupidly content to play second fiddle to his aristocratic master, saves him from one scrape after another, and all this for the pittance of butler's wages!

It must have given Dame Agatha great pleasure to live to see the dawn of social justice in her country. There have been many scholarly accounts celebrating this salutory evolution of England from a decadent class-ridden society to a dynamic one inspired by the ideals of equality and democracy. None of them, it is fair to say, can match the fictional evocation contained in our author's *Curtain*. Its scene is set in the very same locality where some 40 years before Hercule Poirot tackled his first case. Then the rich played and murdered in their luxurious manor house, while the sole function of the denizens of the village was to serve them and provide a picturesquely primitive backdrop for their betters' amusements. But now on arriving Poirot's friend notices immediately signs of change: "Styles St. Mary was altered out of all recognition. Petrol stations, a cinema, two more inns and rows of council houses." As against this fuller, richer life for the masses, how poignant the retribution visited upon the erstwhile idle rich! The once stately home is now dilapidated, the drive leading to it "badly kept and much overgrown with weeds," the edifice itself "badly needed a coat of paint." And, the supreme irony of all, Styles is now a *boarding* house, its proprietors and most of the boarders the last remnants of the parasitic class, justly reduced to this inelegant style of living. Not even Mr. Wedgewood Benn could have wished for a more triumphant reaffirmation of Britain's social progress.

Need one stress the obvious: the close link between our genre of novel and the cause of Women's Liberation? With one exception, no other profession has produced as many famous women as that of mystery writing. And while in politics ladies until our own day have usually owed their eminence to an accident of birth or allowing themselves to become sex objects, in our exacting field they gained the commanding heights through sheer intellectual and literary prowess. On the issue of women's rights, we must consider Agatha Christie to have been a pioneer. To tell the truth, insofar as their fiction is concerned even such masters as Dorothy Sayers and Josephine Teyte do not appear to have been fully liberated. Too often their female characters are portrayed as scatterbrain, clinging or both. True, Sayers' Harriet Vane appears at first quite promising, but in the end it turns out that she did *not* poison her lover and she does marry a member of the exploiting class, probably for his title. With Christie, women

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cease to be a mere plaything or a misleading clue. Occasionally she picks up a gun herself and knows how to use it on a male chauvinist. Over and above such advances in character development, Dame Agatha in an affirmative action of her own broke the male exclusiveness of the circle of great detectives. In her quiet way Miss Marple certainly belongs there, even though few would rank her as equal to Hercule Poirot. But then who is?

This brings me to another aspect of Agatha Christie's relevance to our sad times. In the early '60s (precisely when all our troubles started) high Washington circles, it is reliably reported, switched their reading allegiance from the mystery story with its exacting and ennobling mental discipline to its bastard offspring, the novel of violence and sex, with its pornographic delights. Don't we have here at least a partial explanation for the Bay of Pigs, the CIA high jinks, Watergate? These were all the kind of madcap adventures that would appeal to a mind nourished on James Bond. But would Hercule Poirot have resorted to such unseemly and foolish activities? Not on your life!

But the great detective has even more important lessons to offer to our statesmen and bureaucrats. In recent years when perplexed by such questions as what to do about Khrushchev's missiles in Cuba or the Chinese Communists in Southeast Asia they have tended to seek advice from their academic retainers with their models and game theories.

It would have been much better had our "best and brightest" heeded Poirot's advice rather than that of professors, and consulted the "little gray cells," *i.e.*, used common sense rather than stultifying models. We would have been spared many of the travails of the last decade.

For her own countrymen, Dame Agatha performed an important service by combating their insularity. At a time when insulting stereotypes like "the wogs begin at Calais" were still imprinted on the public mind, it was certainly both courageous and imaginative for our author to have a foreigner as the super sleuth and to have him chastise vulgar prejudice, *e.g.*, as when he addresses a jingoistic murderer: "You are very full of an insular superiority, but for myself I consider your crime not an English crime at all—not above board—not sporting." Perhaps in her unobtrusive way Christie helped pave the way for the British joining the Common Market.

But let us not neglect the ingenuity of her plots and the high literary merit of her writing. To be sure she has had detractors on both counts. Even among the mystery buffs, she is occasionally compared unfavorably with Sayers or Margery Allingham. It has been said that solutions of crimes in her stories are unfairly devious, her style tends to be flat, her characters one-dimensional. Yet such criticisms do an injustice to the meticulous honesty of Christie's clues and the robust concise quality of her prose. What can be more precise, insightful and straightforward than the following characterization: "He had the resolute, competent manner of a man accustomed to meeting with emergencies." Is there anything more that we need to know to visualize the individual in question, and yet to feel shaken, though not entirely surprised, when some 200 pages later he turns out to have been the murderer?

Were Edmund Wilson alive today he would, one hopes, reconsider his hasty verdict of 30 years ago. Certainly the great critic would not hold crime fiction at a disadvantage when compared with the pretentious rubbish that passes so often for a serious discussion of current affairs, or with that amalgam of pornography and dime store psychology that is the typical contemporary "serious" novel. The mystery story and Literature, far from being enemies, are natural allies. There are few ways of wiling away our time that can be as delightful, profitable and innocent as in trying to find out who killed Roger Ackroyd.

Adam Ulam

Adam Ulam is professor of government at Harvard.

John le Carré

Murder and Loyalty

"Love," says a character in *The Looking Glass War*, John le Carré's most eloquent novel, "is whatever you can still betray." In perhaps the finest spy novels in the language le Carré has explored the complicated possibilities inherent in the connected themes of love and betrayal. More than any other writer, he has

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established the spy as an appropriate figure and espionage as an appropriate activity for our time, providing both symbol and metaphor to explain contemporary history. In revealing the fascinating detail and the complex reality of modern espionage he has also suggested its significance for the human heart—the real meanings of loyalty and disloyalty and their relationship to love and the failure of love. Like the traitor in his most recent novel, *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*, le Carré sometimes appears to believe that "secret services [are] the only real expression of a nation's political health, the only real expression of its subconscious." Le Carré's examinations of the health and psyche of his nation (and indeed of the West itself) are not so much spy thrillers as thoughtful, compassionate meditations on deception, illusion and defeat; they have made him not only a distinguished and literate novelist of espionage but simply one of the best living English writers.

If, as Stendhal says, a novel is a mirror traveling along a road, then a spy novel is a mirror winding through a labyrinth. At the end of the novel, in the heart of the maze, lurks what seems to be the enemy—usually Germany, sometimes the Soviet Union, sometimes even England. But on closer examination the enemy turns out to be another mirror, reflecting the most dreadful monster of all . . . the protagonist himself. The illusion of loyalty and patriotism, the dream of allegiance to a set of traditional Western values, even the sense of honor and duty all disappear in the necessities of espionage. In le Carré's best known book, *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*, Alec Leamas discovers that both his love and his loyalty have been betrayed by an intricate British plot to uphold the position of a hated East German official who also happens to be a British agent—the horrible enemy is really the ally. Sickened by the betrayal and mourning the end of innocence, he rejects the alliance and turns back, like another Orpheus, to his lost love. He comes in from the cold only by choosing to die at the foot of the Berlin Wall, the only way out of his underworld.

Distinctions between hunter and hunted, hero and villain, spy and traitor, ally and enemy blur in the postwar world. The relentless pursuer of defectors in *A Small Town in Germany* discovers that his quarry vanished in an attempt to avert an agreement between the British government and a Nazi war criminal. In *Call for the Dead* George Smiley is indirectly guilty of the death of a former concentration camp inmate and directly responsible for killing one of his own former agents who has become, in the postwar alignments, his enemy. In *The Looking Glass War* a brave man is sacrificed on a foolish mission into East Germany in a vain attempt to revitalize a moribund department of espionage; his love for England and for the man who helps train him enables the department to use him and abandon him. By exploiting his love and denying their own, the department can betray him without a qualm: as George Smiley, le Carré's continuing hero, says, "You've made technique a way of life . . . like a whore . . . technique replacing love."

Le Carré has demonstrated the decay of Britain's honor in the decay of its role in the uneasy peace of the last three decades. Initially nostalgic for the glory of the war, then nostalgic for the tensions of the Cold War, his characters no longer have a faith to uphold. Born and trained to rule an Empire, they find their realm diminished almost to oblivion. In *The Looking Glass War* the practice of espionage becomes, in fact, a search for faith, for some ideal of love and belief to justify a mission; unsurprisingly, the dominant metaphor of the novel is religion and espionage becomes a conquest of doubt and scruple, which the characters call "the second vow." John Avery, who is himself betrayed in the book, recognizes the religious nature of the vocation: "For its servants, the Department had a religious quality. Like monks they endowed it with a mystical identity far away from the hesitant, sinful band which made up its ranks. While they might be cynical of the qualities of one another, contemptuous of their own hierarchical preoccupations, their faith in the Department burned in some separate chapel and they called it patriotism." Avery learns that he is a novice who must "abdicate his conscience in order to discover God."

Attracted, like any good novelist, to failure more than to success, le Carré finds in the failure of England and its position in the world instructive lessons for the present. His interest in espionage is clearly an interest in the way government departments, institutions, civil servants, members of a ruling class behave in the twilight of honor. His *A Murder of Quality*, after all, conducts the same sort of autopsy on Eton as his spy novels do on the British government. The traitor of *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* is motivated as much by his upper-class disappointment with his own nation as by any ideology or idealism—England, he believes, betrayed him before he

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could betray it. Certainly, Leamas' description of spying could, with minor changes, be applied to almost any group of people engaged in a specialized and rather indefinable endeavor, from a government bureau to a department of English: "They're a squalid procession of vain fools, traitors too, yes; pansies, sadists and drunkards, people who play cowboys and Indians to brighten their rotten lives."

Besides the victims, the men who die in le Carré's novels, the one character who provides any sense of a moral center is George Smiley, who occupies at least a small place in most of his books and takes center stage in *Call for the Dead*, *A Murder of Quality* and *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*. Short, fat, scholarly and diffident, the embodiment of British decency, Smiley alternates between brilliance and sensibility, always trying to affirm some proper course of action free of politics or ideology. Beset by doubts and scruples, Smiley seems the only person in the books to achieve any sort of victory, though it always costs him a terrible price in guilt and suffering, unavoidable implication in human destruction. Like le Carré's other characters, Smiley finds that the closer he approaches his enemy, the more his quarry comes to resemble himself. In *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* he hunts down a "mole," a deeply placed Soviet agent who has penetrated the British intelligence services and betrayed innumerable secrets and missions. The mole, predictably, turns out to be one of Smiley's colleagues and friends, a brilliant and attractive figure who has worked to destroy his country, his class, his friends, even Smiley's marriage. Waiting in the darkness for the traitor, "deceived in love and impotent in hate," Smiley realizes the pettiness of the people both he and his enemy serve and the obvious motives for treason; he also realizes, in all of the novels in which he appears, the necessity of that English faith in the sacredness of personal relationships, the love that can redeem some small thing of value from a corrupt world. His solitary acknowledgement of human love and decency separates him from almost all of le Carré's self-deluding and destructive characters. As his superior, Control, says, "preserve the difference between us: your country needs you."

In Smiley's tortured humanity we see the reason for le Carré's obsession with the relationship between love and betrayal—treason is not only an act against a nation and for an ideology, but also an act against a faith and against human emotion. E. M. Forster once wrote in a famous essay, "if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend I hope I should have the guts to betray my country." What he didn't realize is what John le Carré demonstrates: there is no ultimate difference between the two—to betray one's country *is* to betray one's friend. Love, after all, is whatever you can still betray.

George Grella

George Grella is associate professor of English at the University of Rochester.

Emma Lathen

Murder and Sophistication

I don't suppose Emma Lathen's detective novels are everyone's cup of tea, but then neither is Lapsang Souchong. (Like Ellery Queen, Emma Lathan is a *nom de plume*, in this case for Mary J. Latis and Martha Hennisart.) However, readers with a taste for the classical or ratiocinative tradition of literary detection which springs from Poe's Dupin stories and Doyle's saga of Sherlock Holmes and whose major perpetrators include such specialists in complex murder as Agatha Christie, John Dickson Carr, Dorothy Sayers and Margery Allingham, will find Emma Lathen a delight. She is surely the most consistently superior writer of classical detective writing in America today, and, fortunately, she is a prolific producer with 16 novels to date. Anyone who laments the passing of Agatha and Dorothy, but has not yet discovered our own Emma can put off premature elegies for the passing of the Golden Age of detection by taking up one of Lathen's accounts of the investigations of John Putnam Thatcher, vice president of the Sloan Guaranty Trust, gentleman of taste and amateur detective.

The formula of the classical detective story is as rigid and formalistic as that of the sonnet. Like the sonnet, the classical story retains this traditional shape in large part because it brings together a highly effective combination of elements. The artistic challenge of such types is to use this rigorously conventional form in such a way as to infuse new life into it while still remaining firmly within the boundaries of the formula. The most brilliant classical detective stories illuminate the nature of the form by shining light on it from a slightly different angle. We recognize the experience we have come to treasure and we have the added pleasure of seeing it in a slightly new way.

A brief definition of the classical detective formula would include 1) a brilliant but eccentric detective who investigates and solves 2) a complex but rationally motivated crime which has taken place within 3) a closed circle of suspects most of whom are shown to be possibly guilty in the course of the story until 4) the detective announces and demonstrates by intricate reasoning from the clues that a person who has seemed to be the "least-likely" of the suspects is actually the guilty party;

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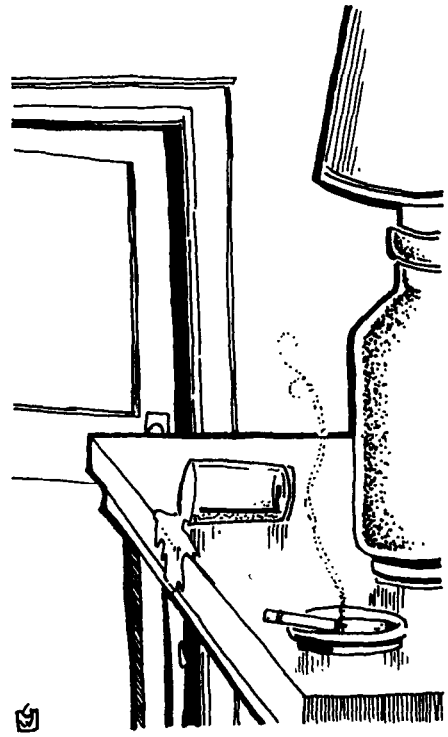
these elements of plot and character, along with certain qualities of tone and theme that they imply, have made the classical detective story seem increasingly artificial if not archaic. The classical detective story's emphasis on reason can seem obsolescent in an age of irrationality. Its portrayal of crime as an unusual event in a fundamentally stable society can seem anomalous in a time of social upheaval and rising crime. Its presentation of the restoration of order to a harmoniously tight little social enclave can seem like trivial escapism in the midst of endemic corruption and catastrophe. Certainly the more characteristic mystery stories of our time are works like Ross Macdonald's explorations of crime as an expression of the moral corruption of a total social fabric, John le Carré and Len Deighton's secret agent parables of betrayal at the highest political levels, Julian Symon's accounts of crime from the point of view of the criminal, or on the crudest level, the sagas of heroic individual vigilantes wiping out criminal syndicates as in such pulp paperback series as "The Destroyer," "The Butcher" and "The Penetrator." In such a climate it is no mean artistic accomplishment to revitalize the classical detective formula as Emma Lathen has. One good way to measure her accomplishment is by examining how she has transformed the basic elements of the formula into terms more appropriate to the mood of our own times.

Her first stroke was in the development of her detective figure, John Putnam Thatcher, the Wall Street banker. The traditional classical detective was either like Sherlock Holmes, Hercule Poirot or Nero Wolfe, a professional detective, or like Lord Peter Wimsey, Dr. Gideon Fell or Miss Jane Marple, a genteel amateur. In both cases, the detective stood apart from the social group whose criminal problem he undertook to solve. This detachment was an expression and guarantee of the investigator's objective rationality. By not being personally concerned in the crime, he maintained his credibility and authority, ultimately assuring us that his solution was the absolute truth. To depart from this convention, as Dorothy Sayers revealed in *Gaudy Night* was to transform the detective story into something else. Yet, we are evidently no longer satisfied by this characterization of the detective, as if both writers and readers yearn for their investigators to be more involved in the mainstream of life and less aristocratically or



professionally detached from the common troubles of men. The private eye is typically involved up to his ears in the crimes he investigates—witness how many Sam Spades and Mike Hammers have even fallen in love with the women they must unveil as murderesses—and that sense of involvement and commitment seems important to contemporary readers. The detective must have something at stake. But the problem is how to accomplish this without undercutting completely the detective's rational authority. Lathen's solution is quite brilliant. Give the detective another profession in the course of which he encounters crimes that must be solved in order to carry out his primary responsibilities. Thatcher confronts murder in his capacity as an administrator of trusts or as a high-level bank official. Lathen effectively combines the detached rational authority of the powerful banker, the professional commitments of the trust officer and the emotional tone of a kindly, urbane and sophisticated man. In developing her banker-detective, Lathen also discovered another interesting potential of the profession. As the head of a trust department, Thatcher has a number of subordinate officers who appear with him in many of the stories and who, working together, create an interesting collective detective, rather in the manner of Stout's Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin. Most interesting in this respect is the character of Everett Gabler, Thatcher's most prominent assistant. Gabler has a tendency to steal the show. He is a supreme eccentric: a man of compulsively austere habits and a dedication to the banking business that leaves the Protestant ethic far behind; Gabler is an obsessive rationalist, but at the same time given to strange outbursts of manic energy when he becomes involved in an investigation. Indeed, he is in many ways an incarnation of the more eccentric aspects of Sherlock Holmes. By making such an eccentric a part of her detecting team, Lathen can afford to make her prime detective a less peculiar and more compassionate figure, without departing too far from the basic pattern of detached brilliance and eccentricity so indispensable to the classical formula.

Lathen's development of a banker detective also enabled her to carry out in a new way the need to create a closed circle of suspects. Without this closed circle the classical emphasis on rational solution tends to be undercut, for if anyone in the world might be guilty, how can reason alone guide us to the solution. Yet how can we imagine a closed circle of suspects without resorting as so many of the classical authors did to a setting outside the mainstream of modern life—a small country village, an isolated mansion, a university quadrangle? As a banker, Thatcher comes into contact with groups of people differentiated from the rest of the world by their relationship to a particular business or social setting. Each novel has a distinctly different social or business milieu and the cleverness and skill with which Lathen undertakes a new environment for each book is perhaps her most distinctive quality. A catalog of some of those closed circles with which Thatcher becomes involved includes the automobile industry (*Murder Makes the Wheels Go Round*), the fast foods business (*Murder to Go*), trade with Russia (*Murder Against the Grain*), the stock exchange (*Death Shall Overcome*), the oriental rug business (*By Hook or By Crook*), the rural real estate promotion (*Pick Up Sticks*), the world of professional hockey (*Murder Without Icing*), the garment industry (*The Longer the Thread*) and many more.

In the classical detective story tradition, the use of a particular social milieu is intricately involved with the elaboration of the mystery. The closed circle of suspects and the details of the social setting make possible both the limitation and the complexity of the ratiocinative puzzle. At the same time, the existence of the crime presents the social group of

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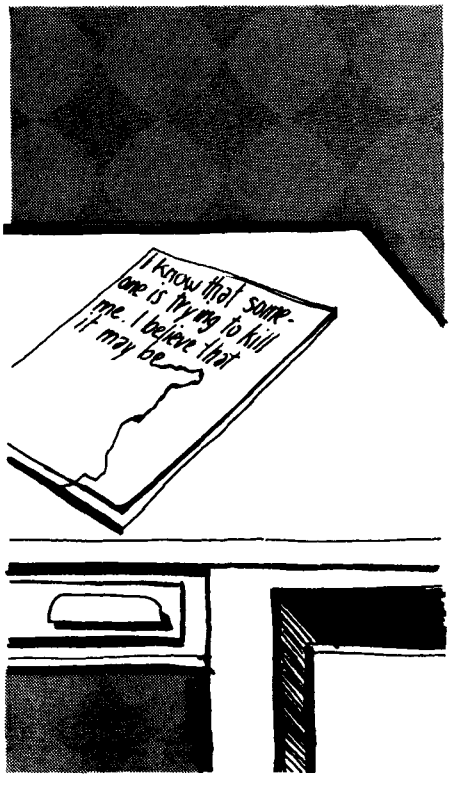
the story with a crisis situation and thus, in the hands of a skillful writer, can cast a particularly vivid and intense light on manners by showing the group's ordinary routines disrupted by extraordinary events. The relationship between mystery and milieu also means that it is possible for writers to place a greater emphasis on one or the other: to use milieu primarily as a means of elaborating a particularly complex and puzzling crime, or to use the crime primarily as a particular angle of vision on the milieu. Agatha Christie, John Dickson Carr and Ellery Queen are masters of the complex puzzle and their stories unroll as elaborate games between writer and reader centering around the interpretation of the crime and the detective's process of solution. Another strong subgroup within the classical tradition seems less interesting in their presentation of the mystery, but far richer in their portrayal of the crime's impact on a social milieu. Dorothy Sayers is one of the great exponents of this approach to mystery writing. Another is the marvelous Australian Arthur W. Upfield.

Emma Lathen is not, as her paperback covers occasionally try to tell us, America's Agatha Christie. While she is competent enough at constructing mysteries, her best stories do not concentrate on the detective's elaborate examination of a succession of clues and suspects. Indeed, Thatcher often solves the crimes rather offhandedly toward the end. Lathen's real subject, like that of Dorothy Sayers, is the character of her detective and of the social milieu he encounters because of the crime. As Sayers' books are most memorable in their genially satiric portrayals of English upper-class society, of village life, or of university circles, so the real delight of a good Emma Lathen resides in the author's eye for social comedy with a mild satiric edge. But where Sayers' comedy usually has a serious undertone, the essence of Lathen's art is farce. In her finest work—*Ashes to Ashes* and *Death Shall Overcome* are my personal favorites—murder within a tight little social circle releases waves of comic chaos outward into the larger society eventually producing a tide of comic folly, misunderstanding and cross purposes which threaten to engulf the whole of New York City in comic anarchy until order is restored by the solution of the crime. These exuberant performances have something of the effect of those brilliant comedies of Laurel and Hardy, like "Two Tars" or "Battle of the Century" in which an initial misdeed (a minor car accident or the accidental launching of a custard pie) quickly transforms the whole world into a mania of comic aggression and confusion. Lathen's best stories build step by step to a climax of farcical anarchy and thereby superbly manifest that basic rhythm of the classical detective story in which the social order is threatened by the intrusion of crime but restored to stability by the detective's ratiocination.

In addition to her gift for comic satire, Emma Lathen shares with Dorothy Sayers the ability to generate a sense of genteel moral authority in her detective through the tone of witty sophistication that permeates her stories. Reading a Lathen is much like reading *The New Yorker* magazine. Beneath her witty and satirical portrayal of the follies of society, there is an authoritative voice that is kindly and compassionate, yet redolent of sophistication and power. It is a knowing voice that understands the realities of power and has experienced the ultimate refinements of taste and elegance, yet is willing to speak to us as equals and to invite us into its aura of bemused and unquestioned worldly power and knowledge. Like Sayers' Lord Peter Wimsey, John Putnam Thatcher is an ultimate aristocrat, so secure in his authority that he can afford to play the fool and to concern himself in a witty and compassionate way with the silly problems of lesser mortals. For some readers the air of understated condescension in the invitation to identify with such a perspective is an insuperable obstacle to enjoyment. But for those who, like me, have a great need to indulge themselves in fantasies of sophisticated superiority from time to time, Emma Lathen is a wonderful and generous guide.

John G. Cawelti

John G. Cawelti is professor of English at the University of Chicago.



Wahlöö/Sjöwall And James McClure

Murder and Politics

When film director Ingmar Bergman announced his sad decision to leave his Swedish homeland, it came as no surprise to either Detective Chief Inspector Martin Beck or myself. And when recent headlines screamed the bloody details of race riots in South Africa, both Lt. Tromp Kramer and I might have told you so. I was not surprised by the real-world news because I read crime novels and have learned more about the malaise of the Swedish welfare state and the sickness of South Africa's apartheid society from police stories than from most "serious" fiction and in-depth newspaper reports.

For the last decade, in the Wahlöö/Sjöwall crime novels, Inspector Beck, who suffers from a sour stomach upset equally by dyspepsia and a distaste for indigestible bureaucracy, has been solving murders and telling us how dispiriting life and work can be in contemporary Sweden. ". . . I realized that

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anyone in this country, any time and in any way, can be attacked and humiliated by a special kind of bureaucracy that grows like galloping cancer," Bergman wrote in his open letter of resignation from Sweden's welfare state. He had been rehearsing Strindberg's *Dance of Death* when police descended on Stockholm's Royal Dramatic Theater to arrest him for his tax troubles. Beck, chief inspector of the Swedish National Homicide Bureau, could have warned the harried film director that this can happen with an armed national police force when "all of a sudden, situations that formerly could have been cleared up by a single man equipped with a lead pencil and a pinch of common sense required a 'busload of patrolmen equipped with automatics and bullet-proof vests" (*The Locked Room*).

Down in South Africa, Lt. Tromp Kramer, a lusty, cheeky sod of an Afrikaner, also has been dealing with malefactors while giving us disturbing glimpses of life in an apartheid society that doesn't discriminate in at least one way; it strips both whites and blacks, the oppressor and the oppressed alike, of dignity, self-respect and decent human feelings. James McClure, author of four South African police procedurals teaming Trompie and Zondi, his Bantu sergeant, doesn't deliver sociological lectures. He needs only a patch of dialogue to make his point with devastating effect. Here is Trompie, in the just-published *Snake*, talking to a young colleague who has asked "what's so special?" about a rash of "wog" murders with black storeowners as the victims:

Can't you see, man? Or are you making the same mistake?

—Not feeling sorry for the coons, Lieutenant?

Christ, no! In thinking it's two worlds apart. That what happens in one doesn't mean anything in the other. They actually touch, *don't they?*

A crime novelist can have something to say about the human condition and society. And that should qualify him for attention as a serious novelist, although snobbish book editors have been reluctant to grant such recognition. But what he has to say can be far more incisive and telling than much of what comes from less talented "straight" novelists in full-tilt pursuit of seriousness.

In both the Martin Beck and Trompie Kramer series, crime novelists have taken the police-procedural format and fashioned a sharp instrument for political and social commentary. As their policemen go about their everyday work, Wahlöö/Sjöwall and McClure are asking questions about the philosophic implications of crime. What can it tell us about how a society operates and how a government is run and how these affect the lives of people? And they do this while telling a good story with a clever mystery.

Nine books in the Martin Beck *roman policier* series have been published. They are the work of Per Wahlöö, a novelist-journalist, and his wife, Maj Sjöwall, a poet-journalist. Wahlöö and his wife were having lunch in a Stockholm restaurant one day when, as he later was to recall, "we suddenly started talking about this idea we both had been nursing." That idea was to mirror Swedish society through the dark glass of the crime novel. Wahlöö, then only 48, died last year, but the manuscript for the final installment in an ambitious 10-novel project was far enough along for publication this fall under the title of *The Terrorist* (Pantheon/Random House).

The Wahlöös wanted to trace a decade in the life of Inspector Beck, an intelligent, conscientious policeman trying to do his job in what they regarded as a high-handed, soulless, Kafka-like bureaucracy. For the Wahlöös, little remains of the early promise of what Marquis Childs once called the Swedish "middle way." Their disillusionment is filtered through the personality of Beck, their policeman.

Beck, whose sour stomach provides a barometer to both his unhappy marriage and the state of Swedish life, ruminates about manipulated statistics on suicides and alcoholism; disaffected youth and neglected old people; bumblers and Keystone Kops protected under layers of bureaucratic insulation; the high cost of police (In *Cop Killer* we are told that Sweden has the most expensive constabulary in the world with a per capita cost of $65 compared with $25 in the United States); the sterile office buildings of downtown Stockholm that replaced serviceable, old-fashioned apartments and wiped out pleasant, lively neighborhoods; the dangers of a national police force that has become an independent power in Swedish politics (Bergman probably would agree).

Each book can stand by itself, but to be savored fully, it should be read as part of

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a running saga. Beck changes and so do his views of himself as well as society. Characters drop out and reappear. The murderer in the first novel, *Roseanna*, a sad man driven to an insane frenzy by sexual prudishness when he is teased by an oversexed coquette, returns in *Cop Killer*, the ninth, as a victim when police and neighbors rush to judgment because of his past. In *The Locked Room*, Beck is recovering, both in body and spirit, from a near-fatal wound suffered in *The Abominable Man*. In that case, a retired police inspector, allowed to practice sadism under the cloak of his official uniform, is killed by another policeman whose wife was left to lie and die in a drunk cell while in a diabetic coma. In *Murder at the Savoy*, Beck, an honest, dogged investigator, doesn't hide his disgust for the victim, Viktor Palmgren, an industrialist who had made a fortune by ignoring the welfare of his employees and by running guns to Angola and South Africa. Some of the other books have titles that sound like those children's tales—*The Fire Engine That Disappeared* and *The Man Who Went Up in Smoke*. The best of the lot may be the first, *Roseanna*, and *The Laughing Policeman*, which won an Edgar award as the best mystery novel of 1971, only to be travestied in a Hollywood film starring Walter Matthau with a San Francisco locale.

Lately, Beck has allowed his gloomy philosophizing to interfere with the dispatch of his police work. And he can become a trifle querulous and tiresome in his unabated attacks on the Swedish establishment. I'm very fond of Beck, but I can't help thinking that it would be pleasanter if he just weren't so sour and could laugh without much cause (a trait that Beck himself envies in a colleague). Now that he has found Rhea, a younger woman with a relaxed life style and philosophy, perhaps Beck can find a measure of personal contentment and get back to his ship models despite the stultifying atmosphere that he feels within the Swedish welfare state. Like Bergman, who returned from self-exile for the Swedish summer, Beck has a deep devotion for his homeland.

Dourness certainly is no problem with Trompie Kramer, that earthy, brash South African policeman who enjoys nothing more than a romp in bed with the good Widow Fourie. Unlike his Swedish counterpart, Trompie doesn't find much time to ruminate on life; he's too busy enjoying its pleasures. But he is a decent bloke who tries to be fair and compassionate while working as a police lieutenant on the Trekkersburg Murder and Robbery Squad. And it isn't all that easy in an apartheid society founded on the principle of racial inequality.

Novelist James McClure, who was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, and now lives in England, introduced Tromp and Zondi, his Bantu sidekick, in *Steam Pig* (1970). Trompie knows his white man's place just as Zondi knows his black man's place under apartheid. They may laugh together, work side by side, trust their lives to each other, and even join in a "Stepin Fetchit yasbossman" routine for public consumption and private amusement. Yet the barrier of apartheid separates their lives.

"I'll get my boy," Trompie says without a first thought about using that demeaning word for Zondi. However generous the Widow Fourie may be with discarded clothes and kitchen utensils, Zondi still must live in a hut in the native section. His wife, Miriam, scissors lacy patterns from newspapers for a tablecloth and draws lines on the rammed earth floor to simulate the wood planking in the homes where she once worked as a housemaid.

"Hey, you know what?" the Widow Fourie says to Zondi after he has helped her move to an old ramshackle house with a big yard. "You must bring your kids here to play in July when we're at the beach. Do you think they'd like that?"

"He knew they would. But that he would never have enough explanations for them afterward."

With scenes like that, McClure doesn't have to write indignant speeches denouncing the cruelties of apartheid. His searing indictment cuts deeper than "for white only" signs on telephone kiosks and terms like "wog" and "kaffir." He simply gives a picture of everyday life under apartheid: Black youngsters, in best bib and tucker, turned away from a wildlife film in a museum theater with seats only a quarter occupied; a Black Spot eviction ("one of hundreds, an everyday event") as bulldozers flatten shacks and villagers are rounded up for relocation; the insolence of a brutish white foreman who resents questioning by a black policeman and dismisses Zondi "from the mind as well as the vicinity."

Against this background of South African life, McClure comes up with cases that provide bloody-minded boggles before Kramer and Zondi can sort out the solutions. In "The Gooseberry Fool" (1974), they have to find out who would kill an abstemious, Mass-attending bachelor who always wore a hearing aid when he sat near the confessional box in church. The body of a young boy, viciously maimed, sets police off on a search for a sex maniac in *The Caterpillar Cop* (1972) until Trompie begins wondering what 12-year-old Boetie might have seen while playing amateur detective. In *Snake*, just released, Tromp isn't convinced that Clive, the pet python, really was the culprit who strangled Eve, an exotic snake dancer.

But McClure never writes just another clever murder mystery. He also is showing what happens to people under apartheid. That's why I wasn't surprised when race riots broke out in South Africa this summer.

Jean M. White

Jean M. White is the mystery columnist for *The Washington Post*.

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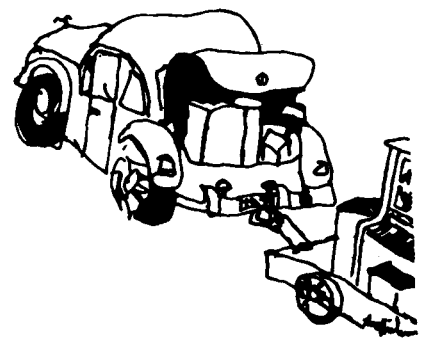

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Dorothy L. Sayers

Murder and Whimsy

Dorothy L. Sayers (1893-1957), a clergyman's daughter, poet, one of the first women graduates of Oxford, liberated woman, took up detective fiction as an alternative to her job as a writer of advertising slogans. Her childhood in a country vicarage in East Anglia was raw material for *The Nine Tailors*, her best written book except for the mystery itself, which is confusing and implausible. A woman's college at Oxford (modeled on Somerville) is the setting for *Gaudy Night*. *Murder Must Advertise* paints a hilarious and charming picture of the ad business in its early days. *Strong Poison*, *Unnatural Death* and *Clouds of Witness* all draw on Sayers' knowledge of literary and Bohemian London in the '20s.

Sayers herself, in a new and unauthorized biography, *Such A Strange Lady* by Janet Hitchman, is described as a plain but impressive looking woman, with a rather boisterous sense of humor, who smoked cigars and presided over the Detective Club in robes made for G.K. Chesterton, which fit her perfectly. (Chesterton was over six feet tall and two yards around.) She was also a Christian and part of the neo-Anglican trend that included Eliot and the Lewis-Tolkien-Williams circle. Her radio play, *The Man Born To Be King*, was a *cause célèbre* in 1942 because of its use of slang and the vernacular to portray the life of Christ. After the '30s she turned from mysteries to drama and religious prose writings. Her verse translations of Dantë are vigorous and accessible, but show that she had no ear for poetry.

Her mysteries are not the "pure" form perfected by Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie, but a hybrid that could be called the mystery-romance: because her hero is a figure of chivalry, because there is a love interest in most of her books, and because she takes a fairy tale approach to reality. If only she had had Agatha Christie's genius for constructing steel-trap plots! Romance tended to get in her way. I prefer her straight mysteries such as *Unnatural Death*, *The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club* and *Whose Body*, where Lord Peter Wimsey is free to sleuth without the complications of passion. It must be admitted, though, that *Gaudy Night* is gripping, both as mystery and as a love story.

If Sayers' plots sometimes fail to satisfy, she often gets by on atmosphere and characterization. Her detective is Lord Peter Wimsey, second son of a duke, fabulously rich, an amateur musician, fop, bibliophile, connoisseur. From her biography it seems doubtful that he was modeled after anyone in real life, but that he represents something deeply significant from Dorothy's own psyche, perhaps a version of the Jungian *animus*. Sayers described him years after she stopped writing mysteries as "not the Ideal Man; he is an eighteenth-century Whig gentleman, born a little out of his time."

In his own time, though, he must have seemed the man who had everything, including a fast, twelve-cylinder Daimler and a devoted manservant, Bunter (who started out as Wimsey's sergeant in the war). In addition to being *the* perfect English servant, Bunter is also a skilled photographer and chemist, a learned man in his own right, correct to the last nuance. The opulence, the coziness of Wimsey's life, the satisfied desires, the lilac dressing gown, the razors and the brushes, the wine and the books—all this forms one of the most complete fantasy worlds in fiction, a perfect texture of escape. The sense of protectedness and mastery are reminiscent of Baker Street and even go beyond it, because Wimsey, unlike Holmes, lives at the very heart of the Establishment; and this to him is a resource as well as a cover. The surface of expensive gadgetry, though rudimentary from our vantage point in the history of technology, foreshadows the obsessive object saturation of the James Bond era. Sayers describes Wimsey's masculine activities and prerogatives with awe, as if she were observing some rare and precious ritual. One can understand her sense of reverence: Wimsey represents a life known even in the '20s only to a few. Now I doubt whether that kind of life is possible even for those who could afford it.

Perhaps what I have mentioned so far will be all that the reader of a single Wimsey book will notice, but this is only the surface of Wimsey's life. Wimsey is not, as Auden calls him, a "superman," because, as someone observes of him, "Peter has always had everything except the things he really wanted." He is vulnerable to the point of instability. Returning from the Great War badly shell-shocked, Wimsey takes up sleuthing as a hobby. This opens him up to the charge of meddling in other people's affairs, and we all know that a good detective must always work, as it were, reluctantly, or at least out of necessity. But sleuthing *is* necessary for Wimsey, necessary to his sanity. Detective work turns out to be his vehicle for putting himself together again after his disintegration in the war. In the process he grows up, becomes in short, a man, though he is already 30 in 1920. (Late adolescence in the Northern countries and all that.) His battle of nerves with the masterful killer in *Whose Body* reads like an initiation rite. When he finally wins and weds Harriet Vane in *Busman's Honeymoon*, he is 43.

Wimsey's life is not complete until he has been accepted by Harriet Vane, the lady detective-novelist with her "curious, deep voice" and intense, dark eyes—"so interesting and a really remarkable face, though perhaps not strictly good-looking, and all the more interesting for that, because good-looking people are so often cows" (Peter's mother speaking). When Wimsey first meets her, Harriet is on trial for poisoning her lover; he solves the case and gets her off in *Strong Poison*, courts her in *Gaudy Night*, and of course marries her in *Busman's Honeymoon*. Harriet Vane is obviously an idealized portrait of Dorothy Sayers, but one keeps wondering who Wimsey is. Sayers describes him so lovingly, so minutely, so passionately:

> *. . . she studied his half-averted face. Considered generally, as a façade, it was by this time tolerably familiar to her, but now she saw details, magnified as it were by some glass in her own mind . . . The faint laughter-lines at the corner of the*

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eye and the droop of the lid at its outer end. The gleam of gold down on the cheek-bone. The wide spring of the nostril. An almost imperceptible beading of sweat on the upper lip and a tiny muscle that twitched the sensitive corner of the mouth . . . He looked up; and she was instantly scarlet, as though she had been dipped in boiling water . . . Then the mist cleared. His eyes were riveted upon the manuscript again, but he breathed as though he had been running.

As Janet Hitchman remarks in her biography, "That woman, whoever she was, certainly loved that man, whoever he was."

Richard Tillinghast

Richard Tillinghast is a poet and critic living in California.

P.D. James

Murder and Dying

For so many years we were given a new Christie for Christmas, and for so many years Dame Agatha was called the "Queen of Detective Fiction," that we have all come to think that her reign was to be as long as that other British monarch, Victoria. Truth to tell, from *Passenger to Frankfort* onward it was apparent that Agatha Christie had (as surely so long a productive career entitled her to do) lost her touch, and the mantle was ready to be passed on. Now is the time to do so. My candidate is P.D. James, already well known in Britain if less known in the States, who when not writing about her Chief Superintendent Adam Dalgliesh is Phyllis White.

Britain has given us an unusual number of women who have chosen to write detective fiction. Of the 322 current members of the Crime Writers' Association of Great Britain, who live in the United Kingdom, 90 are women, and a goodly number of others probably are as well, having taken masculine pseudonymns. (One wonders whether men ever take women's names for this purpose—they do to write "nursing novels," after all.) Phyllis James has soared above this general company, however, and reviewers consistently compare her to Dorothy Sayers and Ngaio Marsh. Others have compared her to Margery Allingham.

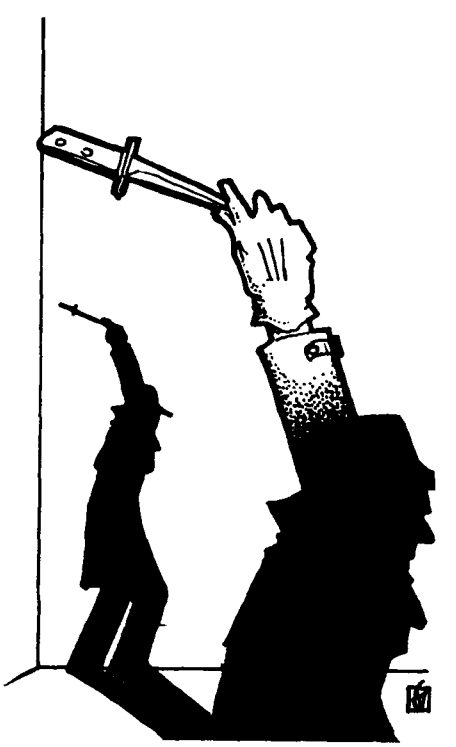
Adam Dalgliesh is a more interesting person than Albert Campion, Lord Peter Wimsey or Roderick Alleyn. And on the strength of her six books to date, Phyllis James shows far more awareness of the complex nature of human beings than Dorothy Sayers did, writes with a more civilized style than Margery Allingham does, and provides plots with more realistic and puzzling turns than Dame Ngaio has done in recent years. Taken as a whole, the six novels—for such they are as well—constitute the most convincing debut of the last decade.

All of P.D. James' six books are realistic portrayals of life and death among the ill and dying. Few writers could have dealt so compassionately, so clearly, and with such a combination of civilized taste and clarity of vision, with the terminally ill. At times the books verge on the macabre and once or twice they slip into the melodramatic, but both the icicle eye and the piece of ice at the heart quickly return. For James has discovered that life is not a series of masks; it is a series of confessions. The masks are there, always in place, but they are secondary; it is in the actions, subtle, traced with a word here and a sentence there, that the confessions are made. In short, James is a writer in the classic sense, where the vital clues to the questions of Who and, at least as important for her, Why, are slipped into place neatly, fairly, unobtrusively, sometimes as much by a turn of phrase, a sense of style, a nuance, as by overt statement. Atmosphere becomes action, the buying of the daily paper becomes the central fact, a leaning ladder becomes an obvious pointer to an unobvious conclusion.

Of the six books, four are outstanding and two are less so. This is a high average for a writer who works early in the morning, goes to a full-time job during the day, and has a lively interest in the world. On average the books have taken a bit over two years each, beginning with *Cover Her Face* in 1962. The title may or may not be consciously from John Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, but the murdered Sally Jupp is soon found to have fulfilled the promise of the title: "Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle; she died young. / I think not so; her infelicity Seem'd to have years too many." It is (then) Detective Chief-Inspector Dalgliesh's task to play Bosola to the reader's Ferdinand. He does so with a steady, deliberating calm that carries reader, fictional household, and beautifully evoked English countryside along, always compassionately, always relentlessly, to an entirely satisfying resolution.

The second book, *A Mind to Murder*, is no less powerful. As the first focused on the need to care for an invalid husband, the second explores invalid minds, in a beautifully depicted psychiatric clinic, in which the chief administrative officer is stabbed to death. Many writers have chosen hospitals, clinics, even prison camps—the modern day equivalents of the snowed-in mountain cabins or isolated islands of the 1930s—in order to provide justifiable idiosyncracies and an artificially constricted environment for their protagonists, and many have been unable to resist cheating the reader and themselves by letting irrational behavior (against which well placed clues can count no more than well wrought urns) account for the final resolution of plot. James does not succumb to her psychiatric clinic, and in the end the solution is simple, pathetic and true.

In both these books, the character of Adam Dalgliesh is fleshed out, as much by indirection as by description. He finds "prying among the personal residue of a finished life" distasteful, for it puts the dead at a disadvantage. He writes poetry, and is happy to be recognized as a poet, but he also knows himself to be a good detective who believes in justice and retribution. He is not quite able to



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fall in love, for he too has a bit of the icicle at the heart, seeing himself, and his potential love, a bit too clearly to become sentimental. He is weary, but not fashionably world-weary, for he is healthily self-centered. He has deep compassion for others, but not so much as to be confused by them. As the novels progress, he becomes more decisive in his work and more indecisive about his personal life. At times he seems unnecessary to the action at all, and the books are not spoken in the first person.

Indeed, the fifth book virtually does without the carefully constructed Dalgliesh. In *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman*, Cordelia Gray becomes sole proprietor of a detective agency. She is hired to find out why the son of a famous Oxford scientist has committed suicide. In the process she learns much about the psychology of suicides, the nature of Oxford, the way in which chauvinism works its way in "civilized" society, and—with Blake—why a person would commit himself to a boundless void in order to see whether providence was there also. The writing by now is superb, with clear echoes of both Dorothy Sayers and Charles Dickens, and as chilling an empty-cottage-at-dusk scene as has ever been written. It is Cordelia who runs the risks and solves the crime, and Superintendent Dalgleish enters only at the end to question her. Set against the hint of a possible future attraction between the two is her observation that he "sounded gentle and kind, which was cunning since she knew that he was dangerous and cruel," and also his observation to her that justice is a very dangerous concept.

Between the second and the fifth novels fall both the best and poorest. *Unnatural Causes*, published in 1967, shows Dalgleish at his least attractive, opens with one of the two melodramatic excesses James has allowed herself, and despite much effective characterization of writers, countryhouse types, and English eccentrics, is unconvincing in its solution. Against this must be put *Shroud for a Nightingale*, set at the Nightingale Training College for nurses, beautifully constructed, with a cleverly new method for dispatching the victim, superior characterization at all levels, and an immaculate laying on of hands, clue by clue. Here mood, pace, style and atmosphere are all in perfect balance.

The most recent book by P.D. James is *The Black Tower* (1975). The setting is Dorset, described with great care. Dalgliesh has been seriously ill himself, and he reflects at length upon the changes illness brings to a person's perceptions of the world. These changed perceptions figure significantly in now-Commander Dalgliesh's ultimate resolution of the murders—as they are found to be—at Toynton Grange, a cliff-edge (both literally and financially) home for the ill. An unhappily Gothic dust jacket may infect the reader with the wrong atmosphere, for this seems the least convincing of the six books, with the black tower itself figuring a bit too obviously, both as symbol and reality, in the conclusion. The progressive diseases of the inmates of the home are not for the squeamish, yet over against the sometimes necessarily gruesome descriptions is a saving note of humor. James knows what the ill laugh about.

Indeed, James knows whereof she writes in all of her six books. She has spent her life working with disease. In describing Sally Jupp, she shows us that youth may be a kind of illness. She knows how powerful the weak can be, by using their weakness against the compassionate. She understands the strength that illness brings. From 1949 to 1968 she worked for the Hospital Service, she is a fellow of the Institute of Hospital Administrators, and she is now a senior civil servant, working in the Home Office, where she is concerned with criminal justice. Her novels are not a hobby but a second, equally real life, and she rightly sees them as serious fiction, not to be dismissed by those who think of crime writing as "mere" in any respect. Born in Oxford, educated in Cambridge, married to a doctor who returned from World War II ill and who died, unhappily and slowly, James has seen, read about and administered over death. Today she blends her two worlds, thinking in the one about the practical question of whether capital punishment is a deterrent (she believes that it probably is), writing in the other about justice and final retribution, and enjoying every moment of it. Forthright and open, her confessions are also in her books, and like the Jane Austen she and her Adam Dalgleish admire, or like that other James in *The Aspern Papers* and *The Turn of the Screw*, her work is in the end "alone with the quiet day."

There will be more of P.D. James, for she is at work on her seventh book. She is a little worried that the moment of melodrama in *The Black Tower* may be like a writer's heart murmur, even though it won her a third Silver Dagger from the Crime Writers' Association. But she also knows that her mastery of the genre is increasing with every book and that the time is near when she will be reviewed as a serious novelist who chooses to deal with death according to the canons of a not unhonorable profession. Her publishers, Faber and Faber in England and Scribner's here, know that she is an exceptional new talent who is just subtle enough to be widely read and yet avoid pitfalls of "popularity." In the same scene of *Duchess of Malfi* from which P.D. James took her first book's title, stand the lines, "I know death hath ten thousand several doors / For men to take their exit." May she yet explore those ten thousand several doors.

Robin W. Winks

Robin W. Winks is professor of history at Yale, and our regular mystery columnist.

Correspondence

Heir Dukakis

To the editors:

Characterizing Mike Dukakis as a "flop" ("Anybody Won't Do," July 3 & 10, '76) shows that you have learned little from Carter's success. His election in November is a formality. The only suspense—which doesn't matter—is whether there are enough Republicans ready to dump Ford's chief support, the successful farmers, to join you with Reagan in nostalgia.

An honors graduate of Swarthmore and Harvard Law, political victor without family way-paver or wealth, possessing the ability to keep his eye on the ball, and imbued with the duty of service, Dukakis is now heir to the lack of priority-ordering that has characterized all government levels. Program proliferation has succeeded only in their mutual cannibalization. While it is hard to escape from the Feds, factories and people can run to other jurisdictions which show no response to pleas to give up their competitive edge.

The challenge of local government is not to defeat itself. Dukakis has not sought national office, which is often the path of those frustrated of management below. He has chosen to work within the means of his state to accomplish what it must deliver.

Jay Levine
New York, New York

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Correction

In "Poems of the Two Worlds" ("The Poetry of Frederick Morgan," TNR, May 15, '76) section six, the last two stanzas of the poem were omitted. They read as follows:

Somewhere, in an antiworld,
a man has risen and looks out from his window;
his face is mine, but if we should shake hands
all worlds, thoughts, gods would find their fiery end,

being reduced to your simplicity,
God, who are Any, All and None—in one.
Now, please, retire; and claws be sheathed.
Cold and bright the day's begun.

Kauffmann, *from page 20*

reminds us that this is not a "true" silent movie.)

Brooks the director has had on-the-job training; compare the sloppiness of *The Producers* with the relative neatness here. And he has struck just the right note with his extras, who are always a problem in farce. For instance, take the nightclub sequence where, in the foreground, Brooks and pals are cutting capers. How is one to handle the people at the other tables? Are they to ignore the foreground antics? That would hurt the impact and weaken laughs. Are they to react normally? That would kill the comedy dead because farce isn't normal. Are they to react comically? Even if this didn't distract from the foreground action, you would first have to find two dozen extras who are capable comedians. The solution found by good comedy directors is to have the extras react *somewhat*. When Brooks and friends are horsing around like crazy, the couple at the table behind them notice it, look at one another, and shake their heads slightly as if Brooks had used the wrong spoon. It's just right.

Murder by Death (Columbia). Neil Simon's parody is of detective films. To a lonely mansion on a stormy night come caricatures of Charlie Chan, Sam Spade, Hercule Poirot, Miss Marple, Nick and Nora Charles—all invited to witness a murder. What's irritating about this film is not that it fails most of the time to amuse, but that about 500 writers—some of them undergraduates—could have written scripts at least as funny. The only difference between them and Simon is that he could get his script produced. He has *been* funny, so he gets a budget and a lot of stars lavished on what amounts to a long-drawn-out weekend prank peopled with celebrities. "Say, gang, as long as we have Peter Sellers and Peter Falk and David Niven and Maggie Smith and Elsa Lanchester here, why don't we do a murder-mystery put-on? It's going to rain anyway, and we can't have a picnic. So why not spend the three million dollars on a film?"

And Robert Moore, who has directed for Simon on Broadway, was around to make it all run like clockwork, alas.

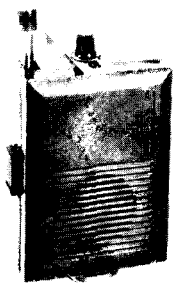
The best performance comes from Alec Guinness as a blind butler, who imperturbably and with great confidence does absolutely everything wrong. It was also nice to see Estelle Winwood, aged 93, being salty in a wheelchair.

The Big Bus (Paramount). This picture runs into contextual trouble. Its basic problem is that no one makes comedy shorts any more and, even if they did, the budget for this idea would be too big for a two-reeler, which is the length it ought to have been. Into one sack are poured parodies of such genres as *Grand Hotel* and *Airport* and air force pictures and *Breaking the Sound Barrier*. It's about the first run of a gigantic nuclear-powered bus—with a swimming pool on board—on its first run from New York to Denver with one of those garishly cross-sectioned passenger lists. The script by Fred Freeman and Lawrence I. Cohen is frequently sharp, there's just more of it than this particular traffic can bear. Too many variations have to be winkled out.

Joseph Bologna, probably the most obscure star in the US, does well as the Steve Canyon bus driver. Stockard Channing, of *The Fortune*, is perky and quirky as the girl. Harold Gould—again—is good—again—as her scientist-dad. Couldn't the whole picture be put under a reducing glass?

The Classifieds

Personals



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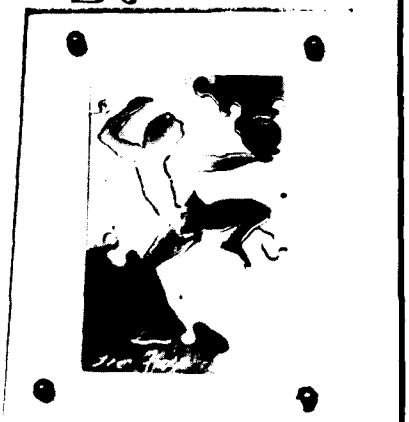

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